

# spare Rib

a women's liberation magazine  
august 1977 issue 61 35 pence

Grunwick  
Women  
the strikers  
their supporters



Action  
against  
Rape

Lurching &  
tottering  
-fashion  
special

Why  
Feminist  
Therapy?

Embroidered  
History -  
Suffrage  
hanky

Reclaiming  
the Night



# HISTORY? HERSTORY?



**SOME PEOPLE THINK HISTORY IS ABOUT KINGS AND QUEENS  
AND POPULAR HEROES**

**SOME PEOPLE THINK HISTORY IS ABOUT EXPLOITATION, OPPRESSION  
AND CLASS CONFLICT**

**SOME PEOPLE THINK THEY ARE INSEPARABLE**

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BEGONIA

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In June, Tom Holdsworth, sentenced to three years for indecent assault and grievous bodily harm, was freed. Carol Maggs bravely criticised the judges publicly. They implied that if she had submitted to rape she would not have been so badly hurt. It's the old myth that rape results from men's sexual urges, rather than the desire to dominate and humiliate; Holdsworth, the judges said, had been overcome by "sexual enthusiasm". One response has been to demand longer sentences and law reform, but the Women's Liberation Movement continues to condemn sexist and classist attitudes — the real issue. But what can be done? How can we organise and fight back against rape? (see page 19)

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**Louise Boychuk**, sacked for wearing a "Lesbians Ignite" badge (see sp. R.54) lost her appeal on July 12. It was seen

as a purely technical matter of wearing a badge. "They failed to deal with homosexuality as it is," said Louise.

Just as a wedding ring indicates heterosexuality, so Louise sees her badge as a symbol of her lesbian identity. That night women sprayed "Lesbians Ignite" on the walls of Symons Ltd., where she worked!

Why not cut out this badge and **WEAR IT!**

**WEAR IT TO WORK!**

## Cover

Photographs by **Michael Ann Mullen**

Top Right: From the Paris Conference — see page 26. Bottom: Grunwick women — see page 6.

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please send your letters  
to Spare Rib  
27 Clerkenwell Close  
London EC1.



These are just a few of the letters we received in response to an interview with Dinah Brooke about Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, guru of the "orange" movement, in SR No 59.

## Anti Feminist Arguments

Dear Spare Rib,

I wanted to write about the kinds of questions/accusations that were put to Dinah Brooke in the interview 'All a Girl Needs is a Guru'. The way the interview is written, as a confrontation between two opposing forces only one of which can 'have right on its side', makes it difficult to be critical of one side without automatically defending the other.

The original statement made by the WLM that the 'personal is political' has proved historically to be extremely difficult to introduce into the area conventionally defined as politics. The London socialist-feminist workshop on sexuality, the many workshops on (feminist?) therapy at the national WLM conference, the theoretical work on psychoanalysis and so on, all indicate that many feminists are now trying to re-explore and re-assert the importance of that whole area.

The thing that distresses me and makes me angry is that Alison and Michele dismiss and counter Dinah's views with arguments that I see as being almost exactly the same as those with which the 'Straight left' and others dismiss/ignore that whole area that the statement 'the personal is political' refers to. When Dinah talks about freeing herself from repressive patriarchal attitudes she's told that it's not attitudes but the real power of the State, the multi-nationals and corporate capitalism that we have to free ourselves from; the orange movement is made out to be self-indulgent in some way because the working class (portrayed as the traditional male industrial worker, not as the 'typical' working class woman who works in service industries and offices) doesn't have the physical time and space to participate in it; and it's dismissed because the majority of its membership is middle class.

These are the kind of things thrown endlessly in our faces as feminists in the WLM, particularly when it comes to areas of our politics and practice, such as consciousness raising, self help health groups, the struggle to control our own bodies, the right to define

our sexuality, which are especially difficult to organise around but are fundamental to the WLM.

Don't you think that we give credence to arguments usually used against us, by using them against people whose ideas we reject, or which seem unorthodox?

Yours in sisterhood,  
Jocelyn Cornwell,  
London N1.

## Facts of a Cleaner's Life

Dear Spare Rib,

Dinah, a follower of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, says about cleaning: "If it makes you feel like shit to be cleaning a bog, then you're a slave of your situation. If you clean the bog and not feel like shit... then you're free of it".

After several years spent at university studying law and literature, and several years working as a free-lance journalist in France, I now find myself cleaning for two hours every morning in a private house in London and each time I get the same feeling of being exploited, though I could say that my employer treats me and pays me well (private cleaning is paid between £1 - £1.25 an hour.)

I started cleaning a few years ago when I was in London only for a short time and no other jobs were available to me... Then after a few years when I worked as a journalist, I went back to cleaning after the birth of my little boy. Though not married I can't get social security because I am living with the father of my child, and that financial dependence is a big problem between us. So I was, with a baby, without money of my own, and I had no alternative than to go cleaning. I read the ads in the local newspaper and learnt a few things.

To be a cleaner implies to be socially inferior. I soon found out that it was better not to mention the fact that I went to university, or that I had been a journalist, or not to look too self-confident, otherwise I would not get the job. The women who ask for a cleaner get too embarrassed to ask you to clean the toilets or to polish the floor on your knees if they know you got some kind of education. So Dinah is wrong when she says "If you clean the bog and do not feel like shit, then you're not slave of your situation." For two hours every morning I free myself of all feelings, I just do my work knowing that it gives me what I want — money, free-time before collecting Sam at the nursery and free time

during the school holidays. But still there is an objective situation, where I am the slave, where I clean somebody else's dirt, do the work that another woman is reluctant to do because of its boredom and the physical energy it requires, and I can't ignore it. Exploitation is not something subjective, exploitation is a fact.

Several times I had an argument with some of my friends, "liberated" women, who argue that if a woman is working out all week and comes back tired and can afford to take a cleaner, she is in fact helping a woman with a child who needs the money and can't find any other work. What they say in fact is "I am liberated, so I go to work and do a lot of stimulating and interesting things. You got a child, or you can't speak English (most of the cleaners are foreigners) — too bad. Come and clean my shit because I have no time for it." Cleaning is an exploitation of women by other women. The only way to help women with young children is to organise and get allocation for a great number of small creches, run by the mothers, fathers, friends, neighbours, where babies can be left the number of hours necessary to do a proper job. In sisterhood,  
Muriel,  
London W.11.

## Western Problematic

Dear Spare Rib,

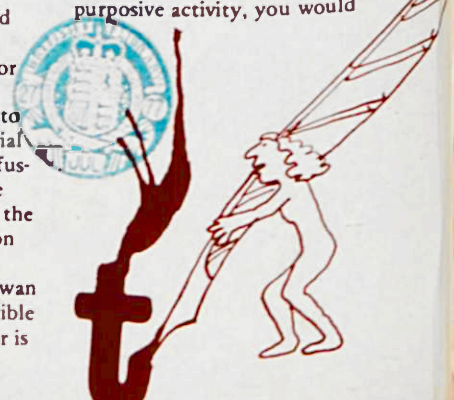
Why such an antagonistic presentation of the interview with Dinah Brooke (SR 59)? Alison refers to the Eastern traditions that Bhagwan draws from — Zen, Taoism, Sufism, Buddhism — without giving any sense of what their teachings are 'about' and why they might relate to the needs of increasing numbers of disaffected or activist people in the West. She says 'Eastern promise is hardly cheap'; implicit in her rather sardonic reference to the Air India and Bhagwan stands at the Mind and Body Festival at Olympia is the moralistic assumption that middle class people ought to do penance for the fact that they can afford to go to India by not going. There's also real mystification in the reference to Bhagwan's teaching on getting the fare together: 'If you want the money, the money will come'. This is hardly a Zen aphorism. It's pretty similar to what a great many Western psychoanalysts and therapists say to their patients/clients, and often with some basis in truth. It's designed to draw attention to the way in which the individual conceives or rationalises his or her priorities.

I don't think the references to cost in the introduction are trivial at all. To me they hint at a confusion about the range of objective and subjective reality. Let's say the individual wants to spend £38 on an enlightenment intensive: the problem for opponents of Bhagwan seems to be that there's no tangible product at the end of it, and nor is the rest of the world affected ('Meanwhile the mechanisms of

state power trundle on'); but assuming the experience has great meaning for you, your relationship to your subsequent experience will probably change. In this sense the experience of intensive meditation is as much 'objective reality' as some sort of productive activity 'in the world'. But that's apparently not good enough, since understanding of the contradictions of the 'wider sexist, class society' is 'not a priority' in Bhagwan's teachings. Rather he talks in terms of 'being, energy, love'.

In the absence of any indication as to the way in which, in Bhagwan's words, 'all religious people, all the Masters, have devised things to bring you out of reason', of course Bhagwan's teachings sound like mumbo-jumbo or feel 'crassly anti-political'. I think this is because the dominant Western concept of what is and isn't political is felt in terms of rationality; thus the article fails, in my opinion, because it attempts to handle the teachings within a Western problematic. 'Zen has its own particular technique', Bhagwan continues, 'and that technique is known as a koan. A koan is an absurd puzzle. You cannot solve it'. The meaning of the koan — that is, the recognition of its absurdity — is derived not from some occult or elitist body of knowledge but from a concept of the ego that is very different from ours; very different, for example, from Freud's dictum on the optimum relationship of conscious and unconscious: 'Where id was, there ego shall be'. Buddha believed and taught that the source of all man's suffering and ignorance was his false concept of an ego-based 'separateness' from reality; Zen exposes the inability of the ego to resolve the koan as subject, to act as though 'subject' can control 'object'.

I think this confusion about concepts is also at the basis of the misunderstanding within the interview about the starving peasants and the fear of death. The essential concern of the Buddha was to teach 'right living' through meditation and morality; the Tibetan Book of the Dead was a text for the dead and dying to enable them to face death not only calmly but 'with an intellect rightly trained and rightly directed'. Of course these considerations could be called asocial or even anti-social, but that would be a definitional question. For example, if you were working with a model of purposive activity, you would





certainly say — and be right to do so — that preparation for death had very little bearing on 'social change'. But it's from another tradition, I take it — one which starts with 'right living' as a philosophical rather than an ad-hoc precondition for experience and personal choice — that Dinah says the thing which upsets Alison and Michele so much: 'If you're not frightened of death then you are not a slave of what anyone can put over on you'. And in the midst of that something really powerful got lost: 'It seems to me that if you have any respect for other people's lives you can't try and interpret them in terms of your own life'.  
In sisterhood,  
Ann Scott,  
London W.11.

## Singing Knickers

Dear Spare Rib,  
I am still amazed to find that men are still ridiculing women's underwear. In the pub the other night a group of men were singing "Knickers, Knickers, Knickers". You don't find women in groups singing "Underpants, Underpants, Underpants."  
Yours in sisterhood,  
Jean Hulton,  
Manchester.

## Unhealthy Concern

Dear Spare Rib,  
I feel the following information ought to be brought to the attention of all sisters. The TUC has brought out an 'Aims for Women at Work', incorporating many of the points of the working women's charter. However under the sub-heading Health and Safety, is the following statement 'Unions oppose any moves to allow women to work on jobs which might endanger their health or that of an unborn child'.

Whilst I agree in principle with the statement, I believe it has three major flaws: 1. That it can be used to preclude women from working in jobs that are traditionally viewed as being male on the grounds that they are too dangerous. 2. That it may be used against women working in jobs that are already known to carry some risk e.g. staff in operating theatres in hospitals; many nurses leave the profession because of back injuries, it would be cheaper to employ stronger male nurses, than to purchase lifting aids, particularly in these days of economic restraint. 3. That there is no mention of raising safety standards to those at which the least susceptible individual is not at risk, for it may not always be a pregnant woman.

I feel that those sisters who work should make other workers and the trade unions more aware, and to persuade the trade unions and the TUC to take a more positive stand in calling for the raising of safety standards. For the above policy if implemented could ultimately lead to many sisters being denied the chance of being able to pursue their chosen occupation.

Yours in sisterhood,  
Anne Scott,  
Merseyside Work Hazards Group.  
For further information please contact me at 16, St. Catherine's Place, Edinburgh.

## Silent Vagina

Dear Spare Rib,  
I thought that you might be interested to know that the International Feminist Symbol as featured in last month's issue is a traditional sign for a vagina, which is still used today both in this country and abroad by born deaf people who use sign language as a means of communication.

Perhaps this could be its origin?  
Yours,  
Janet Allvey,  
Social Worker with Deaf.



## Abortion Street Theatre

Dear Spare Rib,  
A small group of us in Norwich did some very impromptu street theatre to try and get publicity for the Abortion Demo on May 14th. None of us had ever done any street theatre before and we had very little time to prepare — nevertheless we thought our attempt was relatively successful and learned some very valuable lessons from the experience, which we'd like to share.

It would have been good if we had had a definite script, so that we were quite clear about the points we were trying to bring out. In our play we worked the theme out collectively and more or less individually decided what our own character would say. The problem with that approach was that the dialogue changed each time and points were missed or not exploited to the full.

Secondly, the tendency was for there to be too much dialogue (i.e. verbal interaction between two characters) — it would have been much better with more scenes involving a group exchange.

Thirdly, visual scenes are far more effective than verbal. It is good for visual scenes to be exaggerated to the point of absurdity. The same for clothes — make-up and props which all need to be large, colourful and exaggerated.

Fourthly, to encourage supportiveness within the group it is good to practise trust games etc at the same time as rehearsing the street theatre. Next time we go on to the streets we intend to do lumbering up exercises and screaming beforehand — so that we are less nervous — less inhibited. It is necessary to be warmed up, loosened up and energetic before we start.

Fifthly, bring along a lot of friends.

We hope these ideas will be helpful to others with a hankering to do street theatre. We hope to demystify the idea that street theatre is very very difficult.

Basically it just needs guts. If you're willing to dress up as loonies and go on the street the general public will be very receptive. We met with absolutely no hostility.

Yours  
Norwich Women's Street Theatre Group

## Dear Mr Healey

Dear Spare Rib,  
I have just been reading of the Equal Opportunities Commission's attempt to persuade the Chancellor Denis Healey to alter the discriminatory tax laws. He, not surprisingly, is in no hurry to do anything and insists that there is no strong feeling about them in any case.

A way to show him that there is strong feeling would be for women to write to their tax offices, asking for Separate Assessment, which is described in the same article. I had not heard of this before as tax offices do not exactly publicise it. Married Man's & Wife's Personal allowances, Children's Allowances, life insurance and mortgage tax relief etc are equally divided between the salaries of a married couple, instead of being automatically applied to the husband's pay, and so the wife has more 'take-home' pay (and the husband correspondingly less).

This could be important to a woman whose husband gives her very little or even no money towards the running of the household, while claiming every allowance going for himself.

A woman can apply for Separate Assessment without consulting her husband and she will need form 11S-1 from the tax office (and form CG 11S for separate assessment of Capital Gains tax).

Separate Assessment is not the same as Separate Taxation of Wife's Earnings, which only benefits those with high incomes, and which needs both husband and wife to apply.

If the tax offices were inundated with requests from women for Separate Assessment (and Mr Healey perhaps simultaneously inundated with letters) perhaps the point would be taken.

Yours faithfully  
Moira Carlyle  
Orkney



## Sapphist potential

Dear Spare Rib,  
A word of advice — you should 'open out' and develop the lesbian potential of your mag; I hope you realise that's the main reason why increasing numbers of women are buying it. Even our straight sisters are fascinated by Sapphism.  
Ms J Knuckles  
Canterbury

## Can't get no Satisfaction

Dear Spare Rib,  
Being a follower of Guru Maharaj ji I was particularly interested in your article about Bhagwan. As I am also a woman, I am aware of the problems that we women experience in our society. But one cannot cure a disease by treating the symptoms only but by getting rid of the original cause of that illness, likewise one cannot cure a society by getting rid of the symptoms. The cause of our illness being the individual's need for satisfaction in life. For example why do so many men have "prick consciousness" — because the experience of a sexual climax is the most pleasurable experience that they may ever have had in their lives and the result of that is that they use women as sexual objects.

If one could experience satisfaction constantly from inside ourselves, a satisfaction that doesn't depend on our external circumstances, then and only then will this society improve, then and only then will there be equality between men and women, when they realise that they are much more than their physical bodies.

By the way in case any of you have any hang-ups about Masters being men, Maharaj ji said: "God gives woman a great thing because he takes birth from women and to equalise this he comes in the human frame of a man. But in my heart, personally I have a great respect for women because even God has to come through a woman but takes a man's body. You see he equalises."

And don't forget it was woman who told Buddha how to receive enlightenment.

Yours in Sisterhood,  
Christine Barrett,  
Leeds 6.



For the last eight years since Jayaben Desai came with her family from East Africa to Britain she has been watching the activities of trade unions on television.

*"All this time I have been watching the strikes and I realised that the workers are the people who give their blood for the management and that they should have good conditions, good pay and should be well fed. The trade unions are the best thing here — they are not so powerful in other countries.*

*"They are a nice power and we should keep it on,"* said Ms Desai, the most vocal of the 50 or so Asian and West Indian women involved in the eleven month Grunwick strike which has now exploded into a national cause celebre.

*"We didn't think about trade unions at Grunwick — they harass you so much there that you couldn't have any idea about joining a union."*

Before Ms Desai began working at the film processing factory three years ago there had been two attempts to organise a union. Both were smashed by the same management which is taking union leaders and government officials to the High Court to stop unionisation — all in the name of freedom of the individual.

July 11: mass picket — 15,000 at Grunwick's

Jayaben Desai





After nearly a year of diligent picketing the 85 strikers seem to have been almost obscured by the media mob stories which have dominated the news for a month, and even by the charisma surrounding the lions of the Labour movement such as miners' leaders Mick McGahey and Arthur Scargill, and Hugh Scanlon of the engineering union, who have joined them on their picket line.

What about the women who have been supported by those men? What has it all been like for them?

"This dispute is bringing us so many good things," said Ms Desai. "Before the mass picketing began in June the issue was not so clear in our community, it was misty before. But now the Asian community sees what we are fighting for."

"And before, the trade unions in this country were feeling that our community was not interested — that was always a gap in our community. But this will bring the distance nearer. We can all see the result — people coming here from all over the country are seeing us as part of the workers now."

Being seen at all wasn't automatic, however, for the women who make up 60 per cent of the strikers.

"In our community ladies are always obedient," Ms Desai explained. "So some had problems at the start. There was

some bad feeling. But men know the women are always obedient, and in his heart a man knows he must not disturb a woman."

Ms Desai felt quite challenging toward what she experiences as glib assumptions among British women about the relationship between Asian men and women, and upholds the culture of her community, young people's respect for their parents and their right to arrange marriages for their daughters.

But what if a husband lays down the law and blocks his wife's independent decisions, like in a Grunwick situation? The woman must make him understand, she replied. Does that mean persuading him? "No, not persuade. If she feels capable then she should tell him powerfully!"

In the early days of the strike there was a tendency among the young men to assume a division of labour, which often took the form of a protective patronage and which effectively relegated the women, the majority, to tea-making and servicing the picketing men.

Backed by Brent trades council, which has been deeply committed to the strike, as it was indeed to the Trico equal pay strike, the women insisted on taking an equal part on the gates. They have stuck

their own community, never mind sari-clad militants from Brent.

Appalling pay — £25 for 25 hours, and £28 for 40 hours — and the arbitrary imposition of overtime were the immediate grievances that sparked the dispute, which first involved four young Asian men and later in the same day Ms Desai herself.

As she left the factory following a row with the management, Ms Desai found them hanging around outside feeling angry and thwarted, not knowing what to do. She argued that instead of doing "something silly" they should all find out about trade unions. At home that night she talked it over with her husband, also a film process worker in the cine technicians' union ACTT, and he advised her to contact the Citizens Advice Bureau, which eventually led to joining up with APEX, a union for clerical and professional workers.

One of the Asian women who pickets round at Grunwick's Cobbold Road processing factory about ten minutes away from the Chapter Road plant which has been the main action area, explained the particular hardships faced by women:

"What I mean by slave treatment is

# GRUNWICK WOMEN why they are striking — and why their sisters are supporting them.

to this despite the ferocity of the management's counter-attack: Ms Desai's foot was run over by a director's Jaguar, two young Asian women were run down at the factory gate by a scab driver, and in the 42nd week, before the mass picketing and its consequent mass arrests began, Ms Desai was arrested on the picketing.

By the fifth week of the strike they came up with a radical device to confront domestic resistance from their husbands. A Sunday was set aside, the young men laid on Indian food and the strikers made their case together in the presence of about 40 husbands. "I think a standard approach from now on in a strike situation like this must be to involve strikers' relatives," commented Jack Dromey of Brent Trades Council, who is also a non-voting member of the strike committee — which stresses that everyone takes part in the day-to-day running of the strike. Everyone pickets.

Furthermore, Grunwick deputations to factories, building sites and shipyards up and down the country have included two women and two men. This is adhered to not only for the experience gained by the strikers themselves, but because of its impact on indigenous British workers. The strike committee relishes the image of Clydeside shipyard workers talking with the Grunwick women — men who have minimal political contact with women of

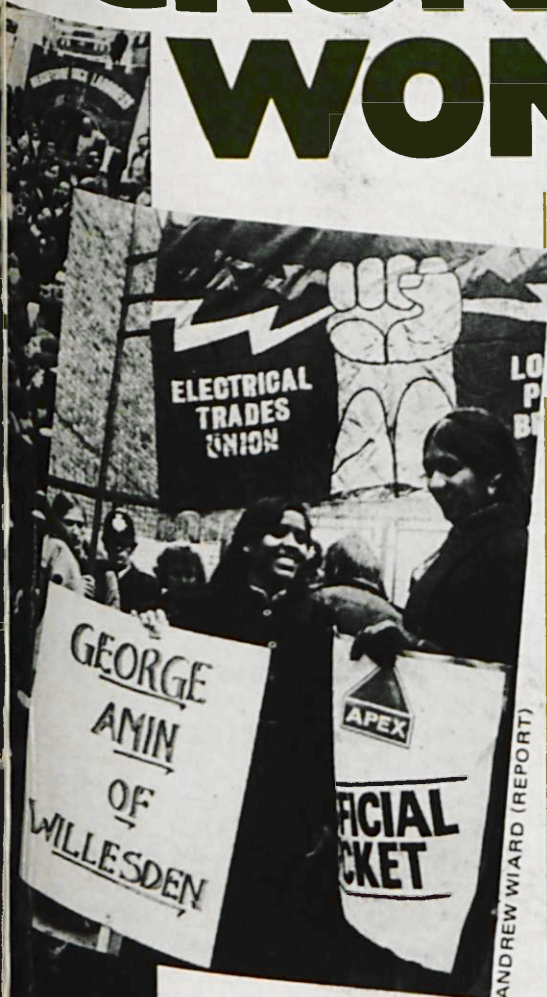
that if a woman is pregnant, for example, she can't get time off to go to the clinic. The management says why can't we go on Saturdays, but the clinic is not open on that day.

"Many of our women have small children at school or in nurseries. The management tells you halfway through the day that you *must* work overtime that night — but this is terrible because you can't pick up your children and you can't contact your home."

A constant feature of life with Grunwick, then, was the nightmare of the sack or agony about your children.

The combination of the trades council, Brent Law Centre and the strikers has been instrumental in the strike, and in strengthening pressure in APEX, a notoriously conservative union. Possibly feeling against APEX made members of other trade unions a bit tentative about offering support. The hesitancy of the union's general secretary Roy Grantham about the mass picketing was evident in his attempts to placate Grunwick boss George Ward, backed by the extreme right-wing National Association For Freedom. Grantham's appeal to restrict numbers to 500 was rejected by the strike committee.

Media coverage of NAFF's intervention in Ward's courtroom battle against APEX and the government con-



ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)

by Bea Campbell and Val Charlton



ciliation service ACAS has subtly shifted the whole emphasis of this contest.

After Ms Desai had recruited many Grunwick workers into APEX, George Ward prevented any proper ballot being organised by ACAS to test the feeling of his employees. Subsequently he sued ACAS for not doing a proper survey — precisely the thing he prevented. Ward and NAFF have turned the issue on its head. Instead of being about the right to belong to a trade union, NAFF insists that the dispute is about the freedom *not* to join a union. A freedom nobody at Grunwick was ever denied.

But the media's scare stories obviously got to some of the union leadership, and it was only their first-hand experience of police brutality on July 1, the day of a crucial APEX executive meeting on the strike, that persuaded them to change their minds and support continuation of the mass picket.

However there is another important feature of APEX — 50 per cent of its membership is female. Did the union make a special appeal to those members to support their Grunwick sisters, particularly given that much of the Asian women's sense of grievance is against Ward's treatment of them as women? "No, we hadn't thought of that," said London APEX chairman Eddie Hayes. "But you've got a point. You have definitely got a point, maybe it could have been productive to address our women as *women*," he reflected.

The women's demands that they have equal right to picket took an ironic twist recently when they complained to their Grunwick brothers that they were spending too much time doing the talking and being "generals" at the strike HQ instead of doing their turn in the picketing rota. We asked Jack Dromey, who has consistently defended and encouraged the women to make their presence felt, what he felt about a discrepancy noticed by women supporting the Grunwick pickets. This was between the strength of the Asian women in the daily action, and the fact that most of the "public" talking during the mass meetings outside the gate was by men. He argued that not only had it been something of an uphill struggle for the women to assert themselves among the strikers, but that in the solidarity campaigning among other workers throughout Britain the women had always been there and vocal.

The dramatic turn which the strike took in the last month began on June 13, the first day of a week of action called by the strike committee. This was planned as a women's day, following talks between the strikers and London Communist Party women, and got support from feminists within the Women's Liberation Movement and from the national conference of the Working Women's Charter, who heard Ms Desai at their rally earlier this year. June 13 was the day when a

MICHAEL ANN MULLEN



The police were aiming to arrest me. Definitely. I'd tried to stop them dragging a woman away — the Special Patrol Group had come out of their van and hurled themselves at pickets.



I got dragged down. Police kept saying 'get up, get up' but I couldn't. I was desperately trying to stop myself fainting and vomiting.



I was incredibly aware of being female, of how vulnerable we were . . . picketing in all that unsuitable clothing, handbags, stupid shoes, earrings that can get pulled.



I think that after this dispute is over we should pool our experiences. For a lot of people this was the first time they'd seen this kind of violence.

massive battalion of police waded into the stunned crowd and arrested 84 people. After ten months of virtual silence on Grunwick, it hit the front pages of the national press.

"So after ten months we found out about the trade union movement in this country and what a power it has," said Ms Desai. "We have the police to thank for that. The police created the Post Office blacking. We had been asking for that for ten months but never got it until then."

After a week of the mass picket, it was extended in the hope of pulling in sufficient numbers to close the factory. For hundreds of trade unionists throughout Britain, Grunwick became a regular appointment. During one picketline discussion about the risk of APEX selling out, a south coast seaman insisted: "Graham can't sell out — Grunwick isn't his property to sell out. It belongs to the whole of the movement now."

The increased picketing also began to reveal that the dimensions of solidarity were much wider than the gates of Grunwick and the daily ritual of trying to stop the bus carrying scabs inside. Picketing was being stepped up outside scores of chemists still supplying the firm, and solidarity action by trades councils and unions in other cities has stopped supplies from all but 50 out of 400 chemists.

Many feminists who got up every day at 6am to travel to Grunwick experienced an edgy reserve in encounters with the scabs, for they too were mainly women. And did it work, all that shouting and fist-waving as the crowded coach carved its way through the crowd?

A dozen scabs deserted the company during the first three weeks of the mass picket. One of them was 21-year-old black office worker Susan Pitts, who started working at the factory two weeks after the strike began last August. She joined the strike a couple of weeks ago after a programme on TV about the strike confirmed some of the reservations which had been growing in her mind.

Inside the factory the strikers were abused and scorned. "The thing is, you don't hear the truth inside there, it's all verbal manipulation. They call the pickets rent-a-mob and scum. And of course when you arrive there on the bus it does seem a bit like that." One morning in the beginning of July Ms Pitts missed the scabs' bus. "This feeling I had about the strike had been accumulating for months, so I decided not to go in. I phoned up to tell them and they kept saying 'come in, come in'. But when I said I wouldn't, they just said 'You must be sick. You are sick'."

What had clinched her decision? "It was when I was walking through Willesden after missing the bus, and I saw some people standing outside Willesden Court. They were a couple of guys who had been going along to the picketline and I got talking to them about it. That was when I finally decided." The men took her along to the strike headquarters to

\* Good news — on July 12 Ward lost his case against ACAS in the High Court.

CONTINUED PAGE 46



The only wide bodies  
we have in service are our DC10's.



If you are familiar with the women of Thailand, you will agree that they are very beautiful indeed. Thai women, traditionally, are slight of stature, graceful of movement and friendly of nature. And fortunately for us at Thai, one of the most attractive jobs a young lady can have in Thailand

is as a hostess on the country's national airline. Which not only means we have the opportunity of selecting girls who are good looking, we can look for brains as well. The fact that many of our hostesses have a university degree or speak at least three languages proves that we find

what we're looking for. Some say it's our beautiful wide-bodied DC10's that cause so many heads to turn at airports throughout the world. We think our beautiful slim-bodied hostesses have a lot to do with it.



An advertisement in Newsweek  
Sent in by Nancy Shatony, London W4

**EVERY** day 800,000  
pupils play truant, it  
was revealed yester-  
day.

And this, education  
welfare chiefs claim, is a  
major cause of Britain's  
economic decline.

Their president called for a  
new school-leaving certificate  
assessing "manhood and  
reliability." Children who obtained it could  
be known as Social Graduates. Mr.

From Daily Express May 31

At Lee's insistence she has a clause  
in her contract that says she can  
leave work by 6 p.m. This way she  
gets home by 6.30 to have dinner  
with him. He then comes home later  
and can kid himself she's been there  
all day like a good little wife.

This puts her one up on the other  
two *Charlie's Angels* girls, Jaclyn  
Smith and Kate Jackson, neither of  
whom has a permanent partner at  
present, and both of whom have to  
work until 7 p.m.

An interview with Farrah Fawcett  
Majors, one of "Charlie's Angels", in  
*Woman*, June 25

Dear Spare Rib  
I am a Deputy Head in a large comprehensive school and part  
of my job at this time of the year is to review the record  
cards of those pupils joining the school in September 1977.  
On one 12 year old girl's card under the heading,  
"Significant Medical Information" are the following comments:

- From infancy has been a "tomboy".
- Tomboyish, never wears a dress, always boyish clothes.
- Very much a "tomboy" - current interest - motor bikes!

The said pupil may feel much at home with us - uniform for  
girls includes trousers!!

Yours sincerely  
G.V.T. London

# TOOTH & NAIL

## WHO TO ATTACK ABOUT SEXIST ADS:

the manufacturers of the product  
advertised and/or the agency who  
make up the ad.

## WHO TO COMPLAIN TO:

The Independent Broadcasting  
Authority, for ITV ads and pro-  
grammes, 70 Brompton Road,  
London SW9. The Advertising  
Standards Authority, though  
notoriously unresponsive to  
complaints about sexism, 15  
Ridgemount Street, London WC1.

Please keep sending sexist  
cuttings, photos, quotes  
and advertisements to  
'Tooth and Nail', includ-  
ing all details which may  
be needed by people  
wanting to fight back.

## WHO TO WORK WITH:

AFFIRM (Alliance For Fair  
Images and Representation in  
Media). A group acting against  
sexism and offensive stereotyping.  
can be contacted at 35 Colehearn  
Road, London SW10.

THE NATIONAL UNION OF  
JOURNALISTS. Send a letter of  
complaint about sexist material  
to: The Mother or Father of the  
NUJ Chapel at the publication  
concerned, with a copy to the  
editor, and to the Equality Work-  
ing Party, NUJ, Acorn House, 314  
Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

Women hostages were taking  
turns in the tiny buffet-car kit-  
chen and to do cleaning.

From the Daily Telegraph June 2,  
on the Dutch train seige  
Sent in by Heather Brooks, Lon-  
don W4

Every Saturday night  
there is a "Women's Disco"  
— All Women Welcome —  
announced by scruffy notices  
alongside posters for  
speeches about "Why You  
Should be a Socialist" by  
Paul Foot, the advanced  
thinker. We have got used  
to them. Slowly they have  
become less prickly. There  
seem to be fewer aggressive  
badges on their mock-leather  
and denim jackets. They nod,  
not effusively friendly but  
not hostile.

Sometimes they ask advice  
about filling in forms or offer  
a drink or a game of football.  
Lezzies or not they have  
maternal feelings and some  
of them make a fuss of my  
little three-year-old daughter  
when I take her in — being

From "The Saturday Night  
Ladies" by Michael Denny in the  
*Guardian* June 17 (the entire  
article was equally offensive)  
Sent in by Judith Skinner,  
London SE1

# Man jailed for stabbing former wife

A MAN stabbed his former wife in the chest  
during a dispute over access to their daughter,  
Oxford Crown Court heard today.

He was jailed for two  
years and sentenced to a  
further six months in prison  
for breaching a suspended  
sentence imposed after  
being convicted of destroy-  
ing the pigeons.

Judge Brian Gibbens,  
QC, told him: "The use of  
knives cannot be permitted  
even in the course of mat-  
rimonial dispute."

From the Oxford Mail May 24 Sent in by S Buclonon, Oxford



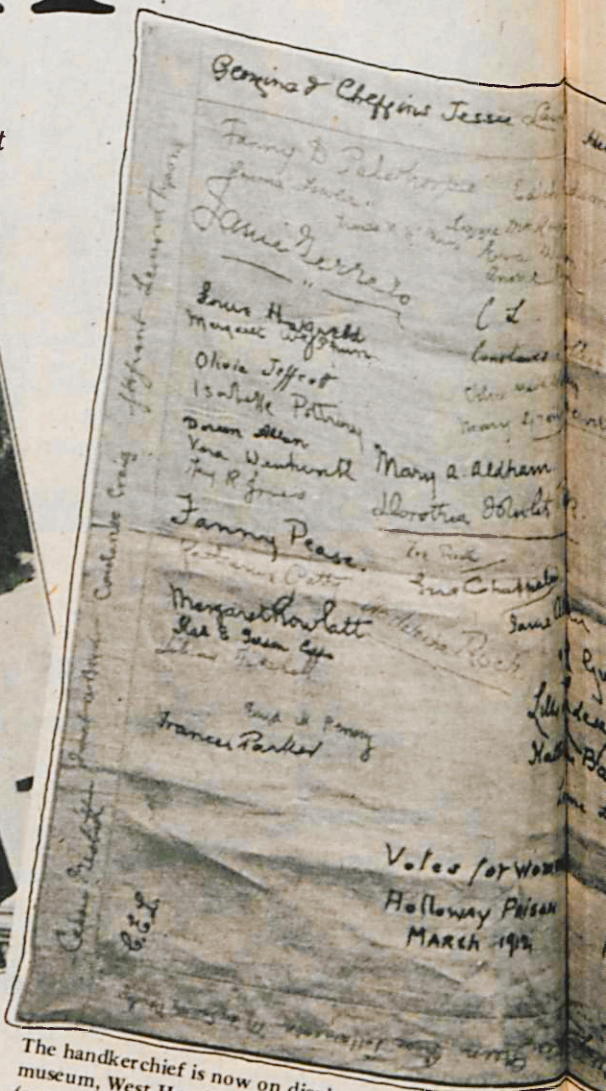
# Smashing Handkerchief

Who embroidered this handkerchief?

Barbara Miller traces the women behind the signatures, what they said at their trials and why they were prepared to go on hunger strike.



Shop windows smashed by Suffragettes

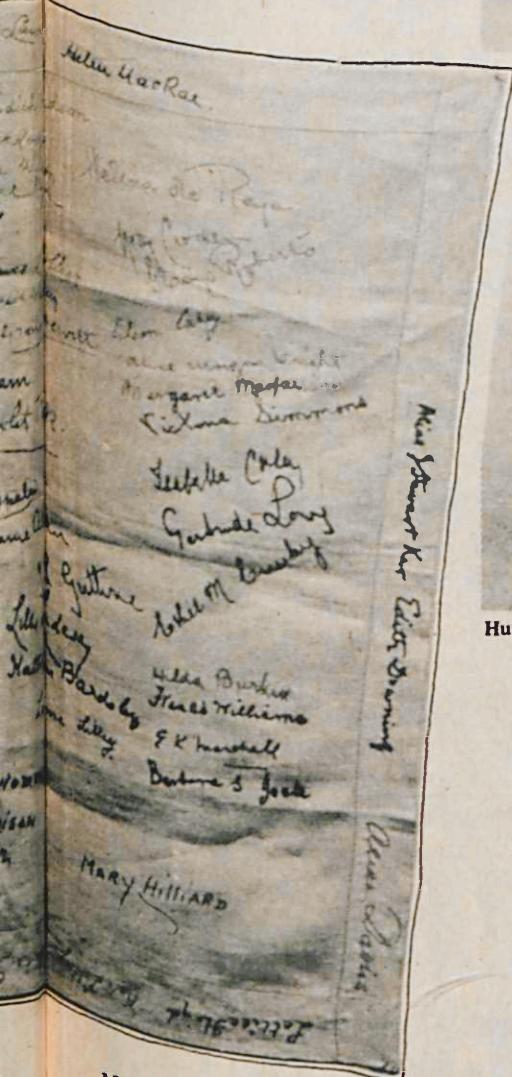


The handkerchief is now on display at the village museum, West Hoathly, nr East Grinstead, Sussex (actual size 12"x12").

The handkerchief, signed by Suffragette prisoners in Holloway, was found among the left-overs from a jumble-sale in a small Sussex village. The woman who ran the village museum showed the handkerchief to a feminist, Barbara Miller. She decided to borrow the handkerchief to try and find out what she could about its background. In her public library she read about the demonstrations of March 1912 and the ensuing arrests, but it wasn't until she read Antonia Raeburn's *The Militant Suffragettes* that she found references to some of the women who had signed the handkerchief. She wrote to Antonia Raeburn who advised her to go to the Fawcett Library and the London Museum. With the help of a London Museum curator she checked the handkerchief with signatures on Suffragettes' letters in the museum's collection. And at the Fawcett Library (now at the City Polytechnic), Barbara was shown all the 1912 issues of *Votes for Women*, the magazine of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) which printed full accounts of individual women's trials and statements.



# erchief



Hunger strikers in Holloway prison exercise yard (Margaret Macfarlane second right)

For weeks the WSPU paper *Votes for Women* had been printing quotes from the hundreds of letters pouring in from women volunteering for the protest. So on Friday March 1st and again on March 4th, while the police were preparing for a demonstration advertised for the Westminster area, WSPU women set out in small groups for the West End, Knightsbridge, Kensington and Chelsea. They dressed "to kill" with stones and hammers hidden in elegant muffs or handbags. At a pre-arranged time they smashed the windows of all the large stores and offices. These mass protests started a new phase of militancy — attacks on property.

Two hundred women were arrested. They were either fined or bound over to keep the peace. Refusing that, they were sentenced directly for up to six months.

Holloway was full, and women were also sent to Aylesbury and Winsom Green, Birmingham. The prisons were so crowded with Suffragettes that normal conditions and discipline could hardly be maintained. Exercise times and work periods became occasions for singing songs, making banners and mementos like this handkerchief.

However, many women were denied facilities, and none given the status of political prisoner they were demanding. By April many of the women were on hunger strike in support of this demand. For those with longer sentences, things became really tough later on. Many were forcibly fed — in the most brutal way — and became very ill. Women barricaded themselves in their cells, and Emily Davison (killed the following year when she threw herself under a horse at the

Derby) was seriously injured when she jumped over the prison staircase. By the end of July, most of the hunger strikers were being released on medical grounds. It was not till 1913 that the Home Secretary introduced the "Cat and Mouse Act" empowering the police to re-arrest convicted Suffragettes once they had recovered sufficiently outside prison.

The handkerchief bears 68 signatures. A few of the women were militants like Vera Wentworth, Eileen Casey and Katherine Gatty, who had often been in prison. Others were activists from all over the country, organisers like Margaret Macfarlane, Lillias Mitchell, Fanny Parker, Janie Terero, Grace Tollemache, Nelly Crocker. But many were unknown rank and file members who had responded to the call for mass action. They came from a variety of class backgrounds and age groups, but they were all drawn together to make great personal sacrifices for the Cause, which meant not only "Votes for Women" but also an attack on the whole of women's role in society and on the extreme exploitation of working class women.

*These are some of the women who signed the handkerchief, with what we know about them.*

**Janie Allan** Sentenced to four months. At her trial she talked about the White Slave traffic, the sweating of women, the shamefully small punishments for those who "outraged" little girls — about these there were no outcries, she said — that was reserved for broken glass.

She came from Glasgow where 10,500 people signed a petition protest-

Most of the women who signed the handkerchief went to prison in 1912 for their part in a wave of window-smashing organised by the Women's Social and Political Union.

There had been a year's truce while the government debated the Conciliation Bill, a compromise which would have given the vote to a limited number of women. But the Conciliation Bill was shelved. Instead the government announced a new Manhood Suffrage Bill giving universal voting rights for men who had made no suffrage demands for forty years.

More provocation came from Hobhouse, the MP for Bristol, speaking at an anti-suffrage meeting: "In the case of the women's suffrage demand, there has not been the kind of popular sentimental uprising which accounted for the arson and violence of the earlier (male) suffrage campaigns — of Nottingham Castle in 1832 or the Hyde Park railings of 1867." The WSPU saw this as proof that polite persuasion and peaceful marches could never be effective.



ing against her imprisonment. In May she barricaded herself in her cell and it took three men 45 minutes to get in with crowbars. She also went on hunger strike and was forcibly fed.

She took other militant actions; at a Glasgow meeting in 1914 she fired a blank at a policeman trying to arrest Mrs Pankhurst.

**Hilda Burkett** Sentenced to four months. She said the militants did not want to spend their lives in prison, but that they did want to remove the stain and stigma upon women. She refused to be bound over, saying she would consider it a disgrace to womanhood to do so. She was imprisoned instead, went on hunger strike, and put up a fierce resistance to forcible feeding. During one struggle with the wardresses she called out, "They will kill me sooner than letting me starve." Throughout the month-long hunger strike she only slept four nights.

**Eileen Casey** Sentenced to four months, went on hunger strike, forcibly fed. Later she was arrested in Bradford and sentenced to nine months. She escaped in men's clothes, but was arrested in Nottingham for possessing explosives.

**Georgina J Cheffins** Sentenced to four months. Went on hunger strike, forcibly fed. At her trial she said she was a suffragist by conviction because after living and working among the very poor for more than twenty years, she had come to the conclusion that all efforts were absolutely futile without the vote. She made her protest "because of the sweated women,

and the women and children broken every day of the year".

**Constance Craig** Sentenced to two months hard labour. She wrote, "There were so many of us that the authorities got muddled, and I served only three days — someone else did my sentence."

**Nelly Crocker** Sentenced to four months. At her trial she said she was there as a result of the brutality practiced on women on "Black Friday" (when women marching to the House of Commons had been attacked by the police). She wanted also to protest against the "vindictive sentences passed on the women of this movement".

**Alice Davies** Sentenced to three months. Aged 42, she said at her trial that women were determined to wrest the same human rights as men enjoyed. They were sick and tired of being treated as aliens, and they would persist in their efforts until they had gained their object.

**Edith Downing** Sentenced to six months. Went on hunger strike, forcibly fed. At her trial she said that she regretted that peaceable and law-abiding women were forced to do these things but that women were prepared to die in this agitation.

**Lettice Floyd** Two months hard labour. She'd worked in Coventry as a children's nurse: "I was there some years, but as most of the cases seemed to be due to bad housing, bad feeding and immorality, it was not entirely satisfactory work and did not go to the root of the matter."

In 1908, the WSPU's first limited militant actions and the harsh treatment they received roused Lettice Floyd to leave home — at the age of 42 — to become a full time organiser for the women's movement. She went on hunger strike and was forcibly fed.

**Katherine Gatty** Sentenced to six months. She pointed out that men were allowed to break women's hearts and homes, and that was not in general a punishable offence. She would probably be given six months, so that for breaking £42 worth of glass she was getting four months more than a man in Edinburgh for breaking his wife's skull. She also talked about a woman who had been in prison with her last time she was convicted, a shirtmaker whose earnings had been between 4s. and 7s. a week, on which she had to support a mother and child. She had come to prison as she had only the alternatives of prostitution or theft. Katherine Gatty went on to say that as long as she saw this wall of misery around her, she would gladly break law if by that means she could obtain for her sex some voice in the making of the law.

**Alice Green** Sentenced to four months. Went on hunger strike, forcibly fed. Refusing to be bound over to keep the peace she said, "Let me tell you what I have gone through lately on behalf of this cause. I have given up my home, my husband and my child, and I shall not go back until women get the vote." She was aged 40.

## Midwives and Medical Men

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Jean Donnison

"... a valuable documentation of the shifting relationships between various interest groups over the long period when the structure of childbirth management in Britain was subject to change. Jean Donnison's book makes fascinating reading, and a scholarly account of the historical background to today's arrangement of midwife-doctor relationships is to be welcomed." *Ann Oakley, Times Higher Educational Supplement* £6.50

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An intriguing new novel  
by the author of  
*Patriarchal Attitudes.*

£3.90

Secker & Warburg





Suffragette farming and dairy school in Berkshire (Fanny Parker right)



Vera Wentworth

a most urgent one, and I feel that only a woman can understand a woman's needs, that women suffer for want and care of men, and their salvation lies in looking after their needs and demanding the vote."

**Grace Tollemache** Sentenced to two months. In 1911 she had taken part in a census in protest at women's lack of political rights. In 1914 she smashed a window at Buckingham Palace while a banquet was taking place. She was arrested, but the king did not prosecute. **Vera Wentworth** Sentenced to six months, went on hunger strike. She was a shop girl, and involved in some of the most militant actions. At her trial she said smashing windows was very unpleasant, and they would not have done it if they hadn't been incited by Mr Hobhouse, and as long as the Liberal Government behaved like that, they would have to do it. She would have done a great deal more had she not been restrained and she would probably do the same thing again and possibly worse. The prosecution pointed out that she had been convicted in 1909, 1910 and 1911.

In 1909 she had been arrested with two others while leading a protest crowd of 2,000 to the doors of Lord Carrington's budget meeting in Exeter. The crowd tried to prevent the arrests and troops were called in.

In 1914 Vera Wentworth was one of the women who interrupted Asquith's holiday in Clovelly — they broke windows, shouted at him in church, and decorated the gardens with "Votes for Women" badges. They also caught Asquith and Gladstone out golfing and questioned them. Asquith tried to run back to the clubhouse but Gladstone "fought like a prize fighter. I must say he is a better fighter than he is a politician," said one of the women after the incident, "The Suffragettes have often been called hooligans, but the two cabinet ministers certainly showed that they too could be hooligans when no one was listening."

**Frances Williams** Sentenced to four months. She went on hunger strike and was forcibly fed. She said it was a political protest against injustice, made in her old age, and not with malice.□

Not much is known about the other signatories. Perhaps readers might have heard personal accounts of them, or could find out more? The remaining names are: *Mary Alham, Doreen Allen, Kathleen Bardsley, Janet Boyd, Isabella Casey, Kate Cardo, Grace Chappelow, Constance Collier, Ethel Crawby, Emma Fowler, G H Grant, J Guthrie, Louise Hargeld, Mary Granly Hewitt, Edith Hudson, Olivia Jeffcott, Barbara Jocke, May Jones, Jessie Laing, Louise and Kate Lilley, Lillie Linderay, Gertrude Lowy, C E L, C L (not Constance Lytton), Helen MacRae, Frances and Margaret McPhun, Emily Marshall, Cassie Nesbit, Fanny Pease, Isabella Pottery, Zoe Procter, M Renny, Helena de Reya, Gladys Roberts, Dorothea Herlet Rock, Gladys Rock, Margaret Rowlett, M de Santay Newby, Victoria Simmons, Leonora Tyson, Eva Wilson, Alice Morgan Wright.*

bound over she replied, "I prefer to agitate in a way that will be successful. If it means six months or six years, I prefer to go on."

**Lilias Mitchell** Sentenced to four months. Went on hunger strike. She said the situation was discreditable to British statesmen, but she would afterwards be proud that she had taken part in militant tactics.

**Fanny Palethorpe** Sentenced to four months. She came from Ainsdale and was not a member of the WSPU or any other suffrage society. At her trial she said she had always worked on constitutional lines, but after the Manhood Suffrage Bill and Hobhouse's speech she realised peaceful protests would have no effect on the present government.

**Francis (Fanny) Parker** Sentenced to four months. She ran a suffragette dairy and farming school to raise money for the WSPU and to train women to be economically self sufficient. At her trial she said: "If I had thrown a stone as a striker, or even as a man intoxicated, I suppose I should have received a very light sentence. For I have noticed that men in Swansea, when they were held up for rioting, got a fortnight's imprisonment. Of course I admit that the whole difference is the difference of motive, but I think the long sentences in our case prove that the motive is recognised, and I contend that if you recognise the motive you should also recognise the provocation."

**Alice Maud Shipley** Sentenced to four months. Went on hunger strike, forcibly fed. "More than half my life I have been doing what lies in me to help the poor and unfortunate. I know the condition of our women and girls, and the dangers that lie about them, and that they have no power to protect themselves. That knowledge has made me take up the attitude I have today. I feel our case is

**Mary Hilliard** Sentenced to two months hard labour. She appears to have written "Votes for Women" on the handkerchief.

**Alice J. Stewart Ker** Sentenced to three months. She was 58 and a doctor from Birkenhead. She said she was the mother of daughters and was ready to do all she could to get this reform: "There is only one way to prevent lawlessness and that is for you to act as a man, not as a judge, to force the government to place our Bill on the statute book."

**Margaret Macfarlane** Sentenced to four months. Went on hunger strike, was forcibly fed. She said that all her life she had been something of a reformer. She was a nurse, and when she found nurses under-fed or under-staffed, she always made her protest. She found that the only argument listened to by those in power was inconvenience. Asked to be



Last month we listed Women's Centres in London and below are the names and contact numbers of groups and campaigns which (if our information is correct) are meeting regularly. If we've missed you out please let us know and we can print additions next month.

There isn't space here to mention all the small consciousness raising groups which exist in different places; to find out about these, contact *A Woman's Place (AWP)* at 42 Earlham Street, WC2 (836 6081). AWP also has details of the whereabouts of many of the groups listed here and would like to know about new groups starting — and those that finish.

(Telephone code for London: 01)

### Health and Sexuality

Lewisham Health Group: 852 7483  
East London Health Group: 515 5547  
West London Health Group: Chris, 28c Cromwell Grove, W6  
Archway Health Group: Julia, 607 0452  
Women's Therapy Centre: 607 2864  
Red Therapy: Jo and Sheila, 980 6053  
Cope (alternative psychiatry group — mixed): 969 9790  
Women & Mental Health: Sara, 727 7925 (conference in September)  
Mental Patients Union: 986 5251  
Co-counselling: Liz, 960 5393  
Friend (counselling for gay women): 402 6345  
Rape Crisis Centre office: 340 6913, emergency: 340 6145  
Sexuality workshops (pre-organic): Eleanor 748 1935

### Children (and Parents)

CISSY (Campaign against sexism in children's books): Pam, c/o Village Books, 17 Shrubbery Rd, Streatham SW16, 677 2667  
Children's Rights Workshop: Rosemary, 703 7217  
Children's Community Centre: 132 Dartmouth Park Hill, N19, 272 9383  
Child Poverty Action Group (and Child Benefits Now): 242 6672  
London Nursery Campaign: Ros, 985 4793  
National Council for One Parent Families: 267 1361  
Gingerbread (for single parents): 734 9017  
Working Mothers Action Group: Barbara, 340 0200  
Action for Lesbian Parents: (see Campaigns)



### Discussion/Action

Feminist History Group: c/o Women's Research & Resources Centre, 388 0882  
Women & Science Collective: 452 6249  
Women & Education Collective: 42 Hamilton Park, West High-bury, N5  
Women on Ireland: 50 Upper Tollington Park, N4  
Radical/Revolutionary Feminists: Sandra, 597 3535  
Anarchist Feminist Group (S.E. London): Georgina, 460 1833  
Women against Fascism: c/o South London Poly, Students Union, Rotary St, SE1  
Women against Imperialism: Sonia, 328 5338  
South London Socialist Feminist Group (for unaligned women — meets fortnightly): Liz or Joy, 274 1353  
London Women's Voice groups (Socialist Workers Party): Margaret, 739 1878  
Black Women's Study Group: 733 8663

Black Women's Collective: Mala, 673 1276  
Matriarchy Study Group: 15 Guildford St, WC1  
Older Women's Collective: Jean, 994 2357  
Gays Under 21 (mixed — meets Sundays pm): 251 2571  
Young Asian Women (see SR 60): c/o Afshan Begum, 22 Boundary Rd, NW8

### Arts and Media

Women's Theatre Group: 226 4243  
Gay Sweatshop (theatre): 673 4992  
Monstrous Regiment (theatre — mixed): 485 3860  
Pirate Jenny (theatre — see SR 59): 960 5875  
Newsreel Collective (film): c/o The Other Cinema, 637 9308  
Women & Film (& TV) Group: Angie Martin, 734 4355  
Women's Liberation Music Project and Register: 935 1841  
Jam Today (feminist rock band): 573 1248  
Women Artists Collective: c/o 935 1841

South London Artists Group: 692 8512  
Hackney Flashers (photography): Michael Ann, 607 4728  
Women in Print: 701 8314  
Writers Group: Tracy, 272 7926  
Women in Media: c/o 103 Elgin Crescent, W11  
Crafts & Screen Printing: 254 3082  
See Red (screen printing): 701 8314

### Publishers

Onlywomen (formerly Women's Press — work published and printed by women): 4a Queen's Rd, Peckham, SE15  
Virago: 3 Cheyne Place, SW3  
The Women's Press: 12 Ellesmere Rd, Bow, E3

### Publications

Women's Report (feminist): 14 Aberdeen Rd, Wealdstone, Mdx  
Shrew (feminist): c/o AWP  
Catcall (feminist discussion paper): 57 Lucas Ave, E13  
Red Rag (marxist feminist): 22 Murrays Mews, NW1  
Women's Voice (women's paper of Socialist Workers Party): Maggie, 739 1878  
Women's Struggle Notes (aimed at working class women): Box 339, Rising Free, 142 Drummond St, NW1  
Sappho (lesbian): 434 1801

### Work

Feminist Teachers: Marion, 727 5551  
Lesbian Teachers: 852 7010  
Youthworkers: c/o AWP  
Pre-school Playgroup Workers: Vivien, 348 0829  
Gay Doctors/Dentists/Students: c/o University of London Union, Malet St, WC1  
Women in Typical Men's Jobs: c/o AWP

### Law and Others

Rights of Women (free legal advice and resource centre): 2 St Pauls Rd, N1, 359 6656  
Legal Action Group (to contact your neighbourhood law centres): 485 1189  
Prisoners Wives Service: 385 0054  
Prisoners Wives Union: 883 2001  
National Council for Civil Liberties: Women's Officer, Jean Coussins, 278 4575  
National Women's Aid Federation (and for local refuges for battered women): 586 0104

### Campaigns

National Abortion Campaign: 485 4303  
Abortion Law Reform Association: 359 5200  
Working Women's Charter Campaign: 690 5518  
Campaign for Legal and Financial Independence: 340 8555  
Wages for Housework: 138 Drummond St, NW1  
Women Against Rape: 138 Drummond St, NW1  
Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Campaign (to fight closure of this women's hospital): 387 2501  
Action for Lesbian Parents (on custody cases): c/o Spare Rib.

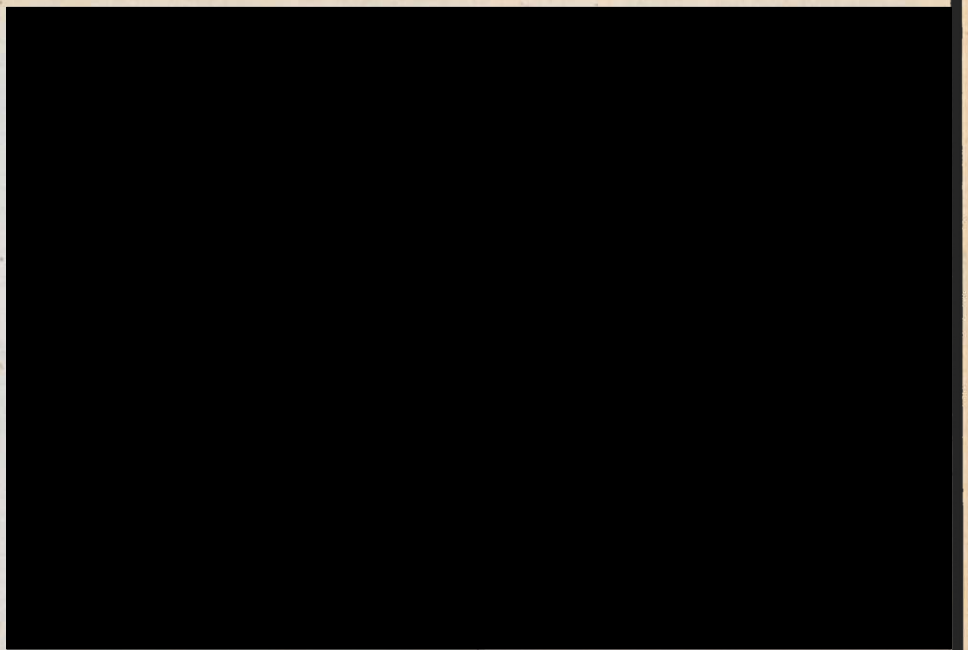




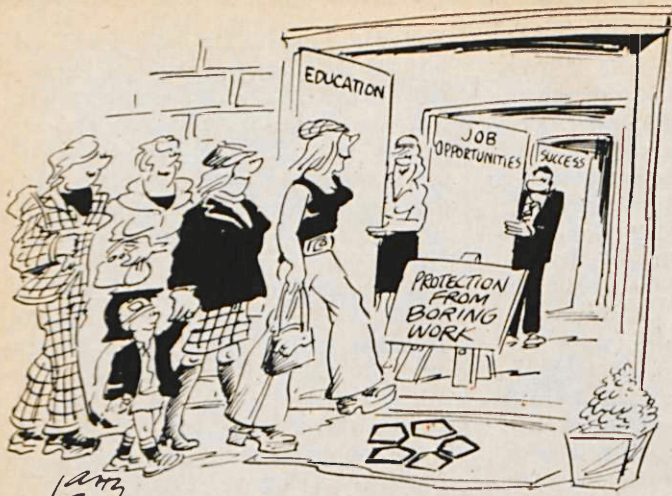












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The two year full time HCHE Diploma of Higher Education (CNAAs validated) offers all this plus the option of simply transferring immediately, or within 5 years of completion of the course, to the final year(s) of a college honours degree. To start you need 2 A levels: but alternative qualifications or experience will be considered.

For details write to Mrs. S. Stutt

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This College is formed from an amalgamation of Colleges of Art Commerce Education Nautical Studies and Technology

pcl

The Polytechnic of Central London

School of Communication

CULTURAL & COMMUNITY STUDIES UNIT

## Diploma in Women's Studies

A two year part time course based upon evening and occasional weekend work. The programme will consist of lectures, seminars and personal tuition.

AREAS OF STUDY WILL INCLUDE:

Woman in the Family, Sex and Gender Differentiation, Sex Role Stereotyping, Education and Training, Patterns of Employment, Welfare Policy, Legal Rights, The History of the Women's Movement, Women and Politics, Theoretical Accounts of Women's Position in Society, Cultural Dimensions.

Course Director: IRENE BRENNAN

Further details from: Ms. I Brennan, Diploma in Women's Studies, Cultural & Community Studies Unit, Polytechnic of Central London, 104/108 Bolsover Street, London W1 01-636 4991

## The TASS Guide to What They Say. Number Three

The Employer who Gripes about Children says



**“But if I extend your maternity leave everyone will want the same”**

Women are entitled to short maternity leave. And you can have a job back after your baby is born. The Employment Protection Act says so. But it's still not enough. Anyway, your boss could be one of those who says he has never heard of it. So what can you do about it?

Yes, you can battle on. Alone.

Or you can join us in TASS. We know what we are doing. We are the union for all staff in engineering. Our women's membership is growing faster than any other staff union. Our policy is simple.

Our members are worth much more than the basic minimum given

by the law. And our unrivalled negotiating record shows we mean business.

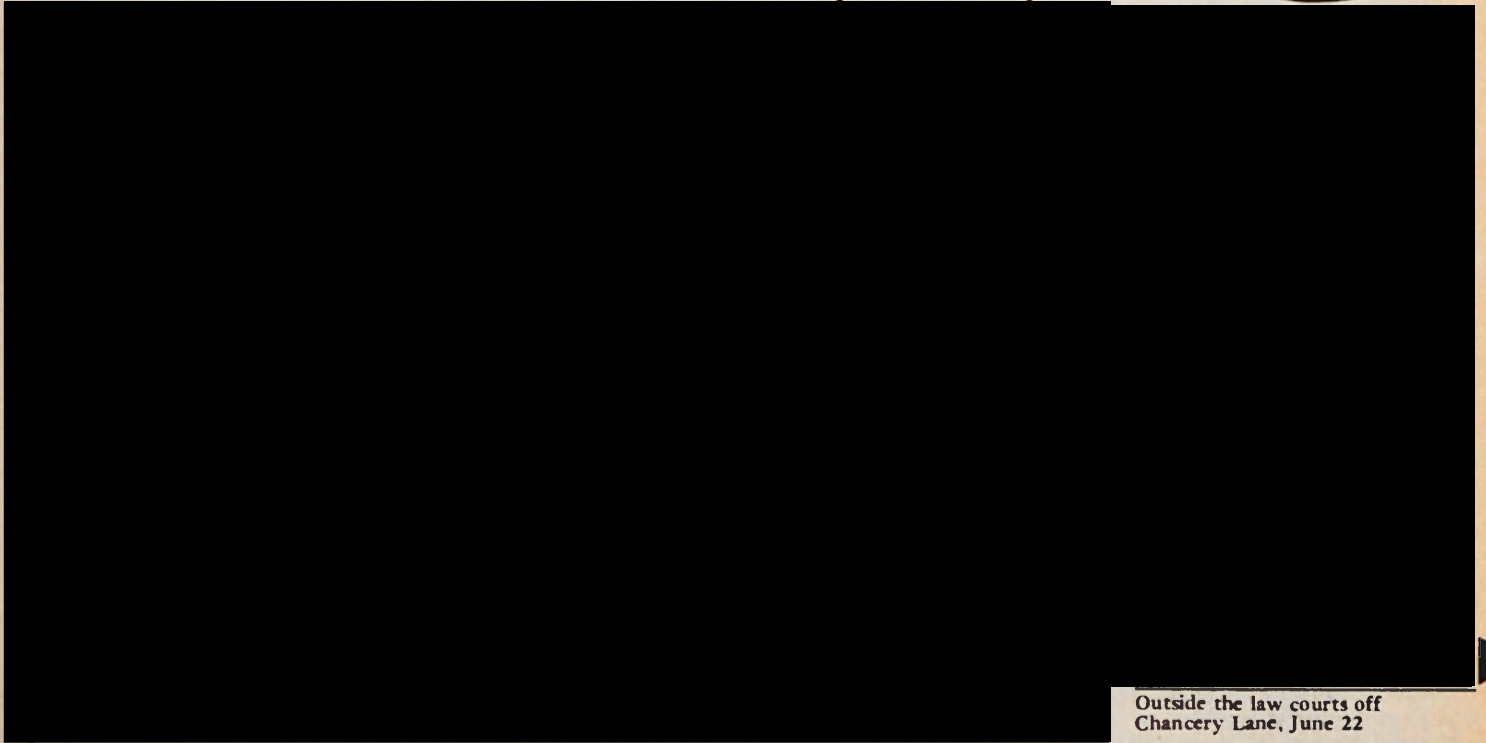
If you want the benefit of our strength, experience and expertise contact Judith Hunt, our National Women's Organiser. Or why not have a chat with your local TASS representative.

**tass**

Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers  
Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section  
Head Office  
Orchard Hall, Little Green, Rushmore, Surrey TW9 1QW  
Telephone 01-949 2271



# NEWS



Outside the law courts off  
Chancery Lane, June 22



BEGONIA





ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

Picketing the courts where Roskill was sitting, June 28





On the night of April 30, women demonstrated in towns all over West Germany against being barred from the streets at night, against the way we're hassled, abused and raped. In most towns the procession went through the bleak area round the station, past men's nightclubs, pubs and sex-shops. In Berlin the route we'd planned was too short for us — we ran on down the Ku-Damm, the main street, pushing the police before us.

Some women had painted themselves and were "armed" with flour bags, water pistols, spray cans and dyes; they'd brought along saucepan lids, drums, pipes and bangers to

make a noise. We didn't want a funeral march — we wanted fun, strength and solidarity.

When women then looned around in circles doing May dances, raced, screeched, shouted for joy in city squares otherwise commanded only by cars, I felt funny about it. I preferred the full-blooded, aggressive shouts, loaded with our fear and rage, though these too always ended in laughter. We literally made an uproar.

I thought of processions to drive out evil spirits, I heard the all too seldom expressed cries of fear and experienced this "disturbance of the peace" as a conscious attack. Yet our protest remained

"feminine". Women scream, men hit out. In Frankfurt a woman was badly injured. A man had thrown flower-pots down on the demonstrators.

In Hanau women were beaten up. When men hurled abuse at them, they'd tried to talk with them (!). The men's answer: blows and insults. In Cologne a woman was so badly beaten she had to go to hospital. In Berlin there were men who simply couldn't understand that our demonstration wasn't the place for them. They wanted to be in solidarity — such solidarity that when Brigitte G. pushed one out he broke her fingers.

If women were attacked by men, the whole procession stopped — a few blokes were thumped and cuffed, had flour poured over them, were sprinkled with lemonade, coloured with dye and scared with bangers. Sex shops were sprayed with women's symbols and sexist posters ripped off walls. We all had plenty to do and felt strong — as long as we stuck together. Speeches, songs, colours, recitations, the light of torches, shouts: against contempt, brutality and male violence, which we still don't know how to resist when things get serious. □

from *Courage*

## DEFENDING OURSELVES

The streets are getting heavier for women in South London. Going to and from the disco at the Royal Albert (see *SR* 60), women have been attacked several times by gangs of youths.

On June 20 one woman was taken to hospital with an injured arm. On June 26 two were knocked unconscious in a nearby pub. Some women called in the police for protection, but on June 27 at closing time the police weren't around — they said later they'd been changing shift. Six women were followed home by a gang, had bottles thrown at them, and one sustained an eye injury which will probably mean she'll lose her sight. On July 3 two women had stones thrown at them just near the disco.

Women have been meeting to work out how best to defend themselves. There's

Jill Rakusen, one of the British adaptors of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (see *SR* 60) points out that our interview should read "British" for "English" through out.

been a lot of disagreement about whether the police should have been called in. Many of those who use the disco live close together in two squatted streets in Vauxhall; they're very vulnerable if they do fight back. There's been discussion as to whether to run, fight back if provoked, or try other tactics such as screaming in unison, dressing up, freaking the men out on

"our terms". Another idea is to leaflet the estate where the youths live.

The general feeling is not to give up the disco. Women from Vauxhall are coming and going in a big group, with one or two cars alongside, and a couple of women on bicycles "scouting". Some who don't go to the disco are showing solidarity by escorting others there and back. □ Jill Nicholls

## Who Ruined the Party?

The "Midsummer Night Scream", a huge £2-a-head party put on by the stage crew at London's Rainbow Theatre, ended with security guards and some of the crew punching up six people.

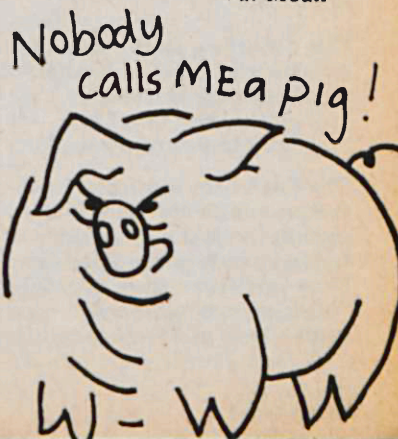
It started when the band Shady Lady came on with two strippers. In protest at the stag-style sexploitation, two men got up on stage and started stripping. Three women joined the protest and the heavy guys charged in.

They threatened to throw the protestors off the 15-foot high gallery, pushed them around and shoved them downstairs. At the shout "Sexist pig," one of them grunted "Nobody calls me a pig, if I get hold of him I'll

drive a car over him," and dug his fingers in a bystander's face.

The protesters were accused of "having no sense of humour" and "ruining the party..." □

Info from  
Pat Moan



This case raises questions about women and the law — do we want to push for higher sentences for crimes against women? We hope this will be discussed in a future issue.

\*On July 8 five women from WAR managed to get into a boardroom at the Ministry of Defence, protesting about the Holdsworth case and demanding to see Fred Mulley, Defence Secretary. When police threw them out, one woman was injured — she is four months pregnant.

\*Peter Langley, another 19 year old Guardsman, has been jailed for seven years for raping a 42 year old woman twice, at bayonet point. He also had a loaded gun.



# HEALTH NEWS

## Is mammography a safe way to detect breast cancer?

Since the harmless breast screening technique using thermography (see *SR 42*) is now considered useless by more and more specialists, women need to rely on mammography. For although self-examination and manual examination by an expert are both useful in detecting suspicious breast lumps, mammography is particularly effective in detecting lumps which cannot be felt. But it involves X-rays and the X-ray technique can theoretically cause cancer as well as diagnose it. So there is need for caution in its use.

Although the risks of mammography are greater for women under 50, and this has been known since at least 1972, the American Cancer Institute (NCI), pushed by the American Cancer Society (ACS), decided to go ahead with a nationwide screening programme for all women.

Four years later, the private criticism of the NCI's programme was opened up with the publication in January 1976 of a paper by John Bailer, editor of the NCI's *Journal*, who questioned the lack of concern paid to radiation risks in younger women.

The way in which the NCI programme was pushed through is examined by the American *Science and Government Report*, which discloses how the ACS was more interested in the programme as a way of continuing to obtain money for research than in its viability and ethics. Indeed, the alarming way that the programme was developed is, SGR suggests, something which Congress "might usefully look into".

Bailer's paper, together with his one-man speaking campaign, finally sparked off a public debate which, in August 1976, led to the termination of the routine use of mammography for women under 50. But because of the way the debate was reported, women started refusing to have mammograms even when they were clearly necessary for a proper diagnosis to be made.

This disturbing story raises the issue of when, if ever, women should embark on regular mammographies. What is in the best interests of women?

The Center for Medical Consumers and Health Care Information Inc. has produced a leaflet to help women decide. They summarise the situation: "Most experts agree and studies have proven that for

women over the age of 50, the benefits of periodic screening with mammography far outweigh the risks. Most experts also agree that periodic screening of women under the age of 35 without symptoms should *not* be done. The consensus is that women of any age having had cancer of one breast, and women under 50 with a strong family history of breast cancer . . . should have a yearly mammography." (However, this consensus is already being challenged, particularly for women who have already had cancer in one breast.) With regard to other women between 35 and 50, they point out that no consensus has been reached as insufficient data is available. But since the theoretical risks are there, it would seem wise to avoid unnecessary radiation.

However, it should be pointed out that the risk of a *single* mammogram is minimal: the potential risk is more from frequent repeat examination, and from the fact that much equipment gives doses significantly higher than the maximum recommended. Although mammographies can be done with 0.5 rad doses (Radiation Absorbed Dose), women can be exposed to between 2 and 15 rads.

Consumers and Health Care recommend the following guidelines based on their own research:

- \* mammography should be done on equipment specially designed for the purpose; other equipment can give higher doses of radiation and inaccurate readings;
- \* the more recently the equipment was manufactured, the more likely it is to give lower doses of radiation, since new techniques for reducing dosage are being developed all the time;
- \* a maximum dose of 2 rads per exposure is advisable.

Radiology departments of large teaching hospitals, or cancer hospitals like the Royal Marsden in London, are the best places to go: they tend to have the best facilities and specialists skilled in the diagnosis of breast cancer. But with the cuts, it is likely that mammography in any form will not be widely available. □

Jill Rakusen

References available from  
Spare Rib News.







"Now more and more I decide" . . . "I've had an abortion — how about you?"



Carla and Francesca prepare to do a Carmen Method abortion

Gay News judge Alan King-Hamilton defines blasphemous libel as any publication which would shock normal members of the Christian religion, regardless of the intentions of the publisher. What huge scope now for Mary Whitehouse!



## Talks-Conferences

**The Equal Opportunities Commission And Inequality In Education And Training**  
29 July. 7.30 talk at the Women's Research And Resources Centre, 158 North Gower St, London NW1. Speaker: Eileen Byrne (education officer EOC). Details from (01-388 0882) until 31 July.

**Planning Scottish Conference**  
30 July. 2.00 at Beano, 10 Perth Rd, Dundee (opp the university). Contact Alison Malet, 17 Lorimer St, Dundee (0382-816517) with offers of help.

**Gay Bristol Festival**  
Until 31 July. Films, boat trip, car rally, benefits, debates, picnics. Details from Move c/o 32 Hill St, Totterdown, Bristol BS3 4TW.

**Feminists' Ideas On Female Sexuality 1900-20**  
5 August. Talk 7.30 at the WRRRC, which from 1 August will be at 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Speaker: Helen Rugen. Details from the Feminist History Group, 18 Lillieshall Rd, London SW4.

**A Woman's Right To Choose**  
6 August. 11.00 annual general meeting for ALRA members at the London School Of Economics, Houghton St, London WC2. Details from ALRA, 88A Islington High St, London N1 8EG (01-359-5209).

**Sex Differences And Science Achievement: What If Common Sense Explanations Don't Work?**  
12 August. Talk 7.30 at the WRRRC's new address as above. Speaker: Alison Kelly (Univ. Of Manchester).

**Feminist Teeth**  
17 August. 8.00 at 147 Archway Rd, London N6. Hornsey Women's Health Group open meeting with a feminist dentist speaking about teeth.

**Women on Gay Switchboard**  
2-4 September. National conference at Wick Court nr Bristol. Open to women who work on switchboard, befriending/counselling agencies and to those who want to join or set

up a service. Information, ideas for entertainment c/o 32 Hill St, Totterdown, Bristol BS3 4TW (enclose SAE).

**Planning International Women's Day**  
18 September. In London; place to be announced in next issue. At the last National Women's Liberation Conference we agreed that we would call a meeting of women in the women's liberation movement and associated campaigns, to plan the women only march for next international women's day.

## Projects

**Women's Camps**  
Until 13 August. Danish camp on Femø.

**6-20 August.** International camp organised by the lesbian movement in Sejerø. Open to all women and children. Cost 500 DKr for two weeks. A 60 woman camp with tents provided. Details for both from Sejerøgruppen, Forenigen Lesbisk Bevaegelse, Kvindehøst, Princessegade 7, DK 1124 Copenhagen K. Giro No. 3297462.

**25-29 August.** Somewhere in England or Wales. "The idea is to get away right into the

country and have a good time together, eating, drinking, talking, swimming. . . Kids will be welcome; costs minimal. If you want to help organise, know of a place to camp for about 100 women and children just want to come, contact Celia Deacon, 19 Lidfield Rd, London N16.

**Women's Bookbus**  
13 August. Jumble sale to raise money for a trial run of the van to take feminist literature around the country (October/East Anglia). Details from Kath (01-639-2368).

**Anarchist Feminist Network**  
"Anarchists believe in the power to determine our own actions without abusing that power to control others. Contrary to common belief anar-

chy is order — without god, without master, without state." As a result of the anarchist feminist conference (end May) a network will be set up. A newsletter is also being produced. For information and copies contact Lynn Alderson, 184 Lansdowne Drive, London E8.

**Womenprint**  
Following the Womenprint conference (June) for women publishers, printers, writers and distributors, it was decided to start a publishing/distribution project. A catalogue with the feminist literature which is available for the moment is being got together by London women. The second one will be done by Leeds women. For details

write to Womenprint, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1

## Fun & Music

**Jam Today Benefit**  
13 August. At Waterloo Action Centre, Bayliss Rd, London SE1. Music by the feminist rockband Jam Today. Also music discussion and practical workshop: trying out instruments, finding out about setting up equipment. Details from (01-573-1248).

**Women's Records**  
A Woman's Place, 42 Earlham St, London WC2 (01-836-6081) has in stock a wide range of women's records and music on women's labels including *Lavender Jane*.

## Publications

**Scottish Women's Liberation Journal**  
The first issue of the *Scottish Women's Liberation Journal* is out, with articles on abortion, feminism and socialism, and Scottish women poets. I particularly liked a very clear-headed article on Women, the British economy and Scottish politics; and a historical piece about rural women which contained inspiring documentation of women's militant resistance to the mass evictions of the Highland Clearances.

The journal is intended to be feminist and non-sectarian, and solicits contributions from all sections of the women's movement, and also from outside it. Subscriptions £1 + 50p postage from Sally Henry, 23 Marchmont Crescent, Edinburgh.

**Zero** Alison Fell  
First issue of this anarchist/anarcha-feminist newspaper, produced by a mixed collective who want to "realise the

links between anarchism and feminism". Good coverage of international material (eg the resurfacing of the anarchist movement in Spain), campaigns & events in Britain, book reviews and an agit-prop column. Useful centre-page spread on anarchism & feminism, exploring a connection, which could be valuable in the formation of feminist theory. Next issue will include a discussion on rape. Readers are invited to contribute. Available from Compendium bookshop, 234 Camden High St, London NW1 at 20p per copy.

Lynn Alderson

**Black Bear Pamphlets**  
Black Bear is a group of feminists and anarchists who wish to publish and produce literature that contributes to the growth of the anarcha-feminist movement. *Black Bear No 1* is on *Feminism As Anarchism* (20p + postage) and *No 2* on *Anarcho-feminism* (12p + postage) from Black Bear c/o 76 Peckham Rd, London SE5.

**Women's Studies Newsletter**  
After a male dominated Work-

ers Educational Association National conference the women involved decided to start a *Women's Studies Newsletter* "to draw attention in the WEA to issues and problems which directly affect women and to encourage our branches to exchange ideas on how we can raise the consciousness of our association about the needs of women both inside and outside the WEA". First copy available free with SAE from Carolyn Brown, Croft Cottage, 176 Hagley Rd, Oldswinford, Stourbridge, W Midlands DY8 2JN.

**Women In Eastern Europe**  
The second issue of this newsletter which is of interest to all concerned with feminism and socialism is available from Barbara Holland, CREES, University of Birmingham. Send SAE (9" by 4").

**Catcall**  
Has changed address to 37 Wortley Rd, London E6. Issue six of this women's liberation publication is now available at 15p per copy of 90p for the six issues.

## Manchester Women's Handbooks

*Book 1: Social Security and Book 2: Getting Your Own Home.* Both are very informative and clearly set-out. They are useful to all women, but particularly so to Manchester women as they include local addresses eg advice centre, social services etc. *Book 1* gives explanations of everything we need to know about SS, including Ways To Get Money If You're Desperate, Appeals, Rate/Rent Rebates. . . *Book 2* explains divorce, separation and injunction procedures. It gives the alternative accommodation available to women leaving their husbands, including Housing Associations, Housing Co-ownership, and Refuges. . . More handbooks like these (health, equal pay, pensions) are essential to tell us our rights and help us through intimidating legal jargon. Available from Manchester Law Centre, 595 Stockport Rd, Manchester or from Grass Roots Bookshop, 1 Newton St, Manchester. 20p each + postage.

Barbara Charles



## Film

Gay Season at the NFT

You can still see:

28 July: *La Fiancée Du Pirate* (dir. Nelly Kaplan).

30 July: *A Gay Day, Sisters!* *Dykectics, Home Movie*

and others. A whole day of Barbara Hammer and Jan Oxen-

burg films.

31 July: *Les Stances A Sophie*

(written by Christiane Rochefort; dir. Mizraki) ... special

scoop!

Also on 28 July: 8.00 a discussion on lesbianfeminism and

film, led by Caroline Sheldon. She is a contributor to a

British Film Institute booklet

*Gays In Films*, put out to

accompany the season. Details

from the NFT, South Bank,

London SE1 (01-928 3232).

Gay Films in Bristol

A fortnight of gay films in

Bristol is being organised by

Penny Holland. Contact her

if you want information or

can help: Top Flat, 2 Ash

Grove Rd, Redland, Bristol

6 (0272-32632).

## Centres

Dublin

13 Henrietta St. "We need lots

of women to help with tearing

down, building up, re-organis-

**Battered Women: Changes In The Law**

National Women's Aid Federation have produced their own

free pamphlet, aimed at inform-

ing battered women of their

rights under the new act and

where to go for help.

Free from National Women's

Aid Federation, 51 Chalcot Rd,

London NW1.

**Battered Women And The New Law**

Useful, step-by-step guide to the

*Domestic Violence Act* from which a woman could

seek legal help or do her own

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out which, it is doubtful that

'battering' would have ever be-

come an issue or refuges have

existed.

## Art

Womanschool

July-September. At the

Women's Arts Alliance, 10

Cambridge Terrace Mews,

London NW1 (01-935-1841).

Intensive day or weekend

sessions on Fri nights, Sat and

Sun covering vocal workshops,

jazz dance, poetry performance

theatre, fabric collage, music

reading, tapestry. Contact the

Alliance for information and

enrolment.

**Metal Sculpture**

26 August. 7.30 at the

Women's Arts Alliance as above.

Suzanne Benton is a metal

sculptor. She will be giving a

lecture and demonstration

with masks and also workshop

activities. "The ever changing

use of metal masks gives gravity

emphasis and strength to the

self-definition of women".

**Not Just Art, More A Way Of**

Life

Open exhibition of women's

art. Sending in dates 1-15 Oct.

Submit one exhibit and limit it

to four sq/cubic ft. "The object

of the exhibition is to explore

the way women's art grows out

to their lives". Include a de-

scription of how you came to

make the object. Contact the

Women's Arts Alliance as above

ing. ... Odd bits of furniture

(chairs, mats, cushions ...) as

well as all types of feminist lit-

erature to build up our library

are welcomed. Contact Irish-

woman United PO Box No 909.

**Birmingham Gay Women**

They are moving in "the choic-

est rooms of the new gay

centre." Contact them c/o 9/

10 Bordesley St, Digbeth

(021-632-6528 evenings) if

you feel like decorating.

**Brent**

138 Minet Ave, London NW10

However, this series will help to

provide a much needed outlet

for the kind of ideas at present

either buried in academic

journals or lost in a welter of

women's movement conference

papers. Available at 60p (+

postage) each from the Wo-

men's Research and Resources

Centre, 158 North Gower St,

London NW1.

**Squatters Myth and Fact**

This is a summary of four

surveys on squatters one of

them commissioned by the

Dept of the Environment

and still unpublished. This

effectively dispels the myths

that have been built up in the

press and peoples heads about

squatters, and shows in fact

that the majority of squatters

are homeless families who

have been unable to find

rented accommodation that

they can afford. It also

points out that the myth

which was built up about

squatters occupying houses

whilst people were away on

holiday in the Times News-

paper was a total lie and was

refuted by the Metropolitan

Police Solicitor himself

WOWEE! Myths such as these

were used as the basis for the

criminal trespass law. Publish-

ed by Self Help Housing Lib-

rary, North London Poly. For

copies and other documentary

material on squatting contact

(01-607-2789 x 5027).

Lynne Harne

**Canary Girls & Stockpots**

One woman's (Edith Hall) ac-

count of her life in working-

class London from the First

World War until 1939. It is

authentic 'history from below'.

Edith Hall wrote it as a result

of attending a course run by

the Workers' Educational

Association in Luton, where

she now lives. Available at

65p + postage from WEA

Luton branch, Barnfield Col-

lege, Luton, Beds.

**Correction**

*Riddles Of The Sphinx* is dis-

tributed by the British Film

Institute distribution library

and not by The Other Cinema

ORGANISE AGAINST  
THE NATIONAL FRONT



**DONT LET RACISM  
DIVIDE US**

See Red poster 18" x 25" Yellow/Red/Brown on White.

**Posters**

See Red women's workshop illustrated catalogue of posters is now out, so you can order

old favourites and some new ones. Send SAE to 16A Iliffe Yard, off Crampton St, London SE17 (01-701-8314).

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## WHY SOCIALIST FEMINISM?

### Gatherings in Paris and Amsterdam

Two socialist feminist conferences were held in Europe recently — one of about 4,000 women at Vincennes University in Paris on May 28–30, the other of 250 in the “Vrouwenhuis” (women’s house) in Amsterdam on June 3–5.

*What was the difference between them? What did women gain from them? Five women report.*

“Socialism is a pre-condition for women’s liberation . . . Socialism though is not a guarantee for women’s liberation.” (Feminist Socialist Platform in the Netherlands).

Women have arrived at a socialist feminist perspective from two different directions. There are those who began to become politically aware through their involvement in the women’s movement, and have been led to identify the growing pressures on women with the capitalist society in which we live. And there are those who were first aware of capitalist exploitation and later of their oppression as women, through involvement in the women’s movement.

Few feminists who, over the last five years, have sought socialist/revolutionary groups to work with have found one with a theory and practice which deals adequately with the specific oppression of women in the patriarchal tradition of which capitalism is one expression.

Many women whose first involvement was with left groups have also become aware of these limitations. For traditional socialist groups have a theory and practice which deals with capitalism only. They continue to operate within a patriarchal tradition. Feminist socialists are groping towards a theory and prac-

tice which deal with both patriarchy and capitalism.

In December 1975 a group of French women sent an appeal for an international gathering of women trying to come to grips with these problems. At the first two planning meetings there were no major disagreements, but at the third, in London in October 1976, differences in emphasis manifested themselves, because a wider range of political tendencies was represented.

We need to understand the differences if the evolution of Socialist Feminism is not to be weakened by fragmentation.

The split seems to have taken place over two specific issues. The first was whether the women’s struggle should be viewed as *within* or *alongside* the class struggle. The second was whether discussion at the proposed conference should centre around Women and Work or be more broadly based and include issues like sexuality, abortion, the position of women in the home, in the community . . .

It is unfortunate that these issues led to the calling of two separate conferences. They could have been better considered at the international conference itself. The differences are due partly to language problems, partly to differences in the political, economic and cultural realities faced by women in different countries.

Michael Ann Mullen (Paris)



Having attended the planning meeting in London where the split occurred, it seemed to me that one of the most fundamental disagreements was that the French women who initiated the idea for such a conference wanted a prior commitment to an agreed political line from women attending “their” conference. To a large extent, the Amsterdam conference was organised in opposition to this, as an opportunity for informal discussion among a relatively small number of women with widely divergent views about the meaning and practice of socialist feminism.

At this level the conference succeeded well — its size allowed a lot of personal contact with women from almost all West European countries. For many of us, this was the first time we’d had detailed discussions with feminists from other countries, so it was more productive in finding out what conditions were like elsewhere than in making advances collectively on a more analytical level. These discussions demonstrated that socialist feminism is widely defined not only

between countries, but within them.

The conference brought together many British women with different politics, so I found the impromptu meeting British women held on the Monday after the conference one of the most productive of the weekend. Comparing differences in attitudes within other national groups helped us air without acrimony our own differences — for example on violence and on Wages for Housework. I felt that one of the problems of the conference as a whole was that fear of splits sometimes hampered open discussion. We must consider ways of working which are supportive but don’t blur our disagreements.

Considering the oppositional stance of the conference, the original list of topics wasn’t wide-ranging and imaginative enough. In the end discussions weren’t only restricted to predictable topics like women and the left, the crisis, the legal system. There were also workshops on anarchism and feminism, sex class, sexuality, rape and health. Surprisingly, given the growth of the extreme right-wing in many count-



true socialist society — the feminist revolution has to take place alongside the revolution of the control of production.

Anna Briggs (Amsterdam)

I found the 'Festival' atmosphere in Paris a great morale booster, but it was hard to settle down to work. Both the comradeship feeling in Paris and the smaller work situation in Amsterdam are necessary, and it may be better for the "split" to occur in this manner. So why not have an International Women's Festival, open to all, as well as a working conference, at different times of the year so that those of us who want both can have our cake and eat it?

In Paris the 'social' was great, impromptu singing and dancing, helped by the weather, gave us all a really good feeling of togetherness. A women's film group from Aix-en-Provence showed films. One showed a communal household during the birth of a child, with everyone present, including the children. Yes, it was hard work, but the joy of all the familiar faces around her was evident. The Hackney Flashers Collective showed their exhibition of Women at Work in Hackney, but due to bad organisation there was no good space to show it. We mounted it around the *Spare Rib* stand, sometimes half submerged in the crowd, but still it was seen by women from many countries.

In Amsterdam also films were shown, two from Denmark. One was of the Red Stocking Women squatting a house for a women's centre, and showed how the centre was run. The other showed a huge festival in a park in Copenhagen, which the Red Stockings have organised for the last three years.

Spiderwoman, a group of five women from New York, performed a drama about women and violence, which was very hardhitting and funny, though you didn't know whether to laugh or cry as the laughter is at our own situation.

It's a pity the British women in Paris didn't manage to meet as a group before or during the conference. Much of the sense of isolation in a huge mass may have been avoided that way. There should be just one conference next time, possibly on a delegate basis. In Britain the Socialist-Feminist Workshops and the National Conference next January could work towards unifying socialist-feminists and finding a way of selecting delegates for international conferences. An Dekker (Paris)

Paris was difficult to relate to especially if you went on your own, as I did. There was no-



MICHAEL ANN MULLEN

ries, and its implications for women, there was no workshop on fascism, though I did talk to an Italian woman who explained to me the problem they were encountering at their women's centre — some pro-fascist women who carry guns started to use the place. The feminists there haven't felt they could exclude them, and this led us to try to work out just what we meant by the concept "sisterhood".

In this conversation and in others I felt hampered by not knowing the necessary language. The main language used at the conference was English, and in many workshops there were translations. I feel strongly that we should not be seduced by the similarity of language into thinking that we have more to learn from our American sisters than from sisters very close to us geographically, economically and in terms of their political systems, but who happen to speak foreign languages. We must make an effort to communicate, and this conference was an encouraging first step.

Provided enough space is available, even a huge conference could be divided into small workshops continuing

throughout the weekend. Additional workshops on particular themes could be interspersed. This helps overcome alienation and language difficulties, and should stop any one political tendency dominating the conference.

Gail Chester (Amsterdam)

For an international conference it's obviously essential to start off with some knowledge of the campaigns and perspectives of women from different countries. This was made possible at Amsterdam by the range of papers available, by having a whole half-day in which to gather informally and get to know individual women and by the first workshop theme "What is Socialist-Feminism?" to which we were all assigned on a random basis. People either stayed together from the first workshop for the entire weekend, or stayed in the subject workshops for three sessions, so that the problem of endlessly "swopping" experiences was avoided, and people got down to deep discussions with the same sisters from each country, based on a fair knowledge of what those particular sisters were doing and thinking.

"I found the 'Festival' atmosphere Paris a great morale booster"

Like the sisters at the Paris conference, we got the impression that there were similarities in the campaigning going on in the "Latin" countries — Portugal, Spain, and Italy — round problems like abortion, contraception and family policy, whereas in the Northern "Social Democratic" states, the enemy was more insidious — despite a veneer of liberalism towards women, in many countries a reactionary backlash was taking place. Danish and Swedish women said the patriarchy was hard to fight in their countries because it gave every outward sign of having disappeared.

I gained from the conference a great feeling of strength — a vindication of my belief that only feminist socialism could give the lead to the sort of changes I want to see in society — and that we have now reached a position of strength where we can say to those organising in left groups that *we* are the left — socialism must become feminist or it will miss out so many aspects of people's lives that it couldn't really be called "socialism". A society which oppressed women and exploited their labour couldn't be a



# FOREIGN NEWS

where central to go to find out about basic things like where workshops and stalls are, where is the restaurant, where is Block E. Translating into four languages made discussion in workshops a laborious process. It was especially frustrating that so few women could get into the plenary sessions.

The emphasis in Paris was to be on exchanging information about different struggles and formulating plans for international solidarity actions. I felt this was achieved. There were workshops on three areas — violence, abortion and work. Under the heading "violence" were workshops on rape, repression and torture, and on battered women. Under "abortion" were workshops on the "consultori" (Italian health centres — see SR 51), on abortion campaigning, maternity and childcare. Under "work" came housework, trade unions, and women's groups in the workplace.

Quite a few "unofficial" workshops were set up. These were hard to find — in fact I stumbled on one (literally!)

in the grass. They were on anti-nuclear energy campaigns (a big issue in Europe), women and socialism (completely dominated by sectarian squabbling between Spartacists and the rest), on lesbianism, women's centres, women and children and women in the community (there may have been more).

Proposals were agreed for international initiatives on abortion. A manifesto is to be discussed in each country before having an international conference on abortion and launching an international campaign. A separate proposal was to start a campaign around the use of drugs (especially contraceptive drugs) and each national group was to look at the workings of the drug companies.

Although I got a lot of useful information from the Paris conference and many questions were raised in my mind, I found little opportunity to express my questions. In fact I didn't speak at all and was totally passive — it was all too confusing and overwhelming.

Amsterdam was much better from that point of view. Some



"For many of us this was the first time we'd had detailed discussions with feminists from other countries" — a workshop in Paris

of the workshops and papers were specifically about the relationship of socialist feminism to left wing groups and the la-

bour movement. I was struck by how many women there are internationally who used to be in left groups but have left them

**T**hough many Spanish feminists chose to boycott the June general elections, the first in 41 years (see SR 60), others have been working with the innumerable left organisations who did take part. Two of the main women's organisations, the Democratic Women's Movement (MDM), and the Women's Liberation Front (FDM), used the election campaign to agitate round women's issues.

As political parties competed for the women's vote, abortion, contraception and divorce were widely debated.

One of the very few women deputies to be elected, 37-year-old Carlota Bustelo, a Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) candidate for Madrid, is also a feminist, active in the FDM. As the second biggest parliamentary party the PSOE will have a big say in what becomes law in the next few months. Jenny Rathbone, in Spain for the elections, asked Carlota why she was in the PSOE and what legal changes affecting women she expected.

*I met her in a Madrid cafe on the eve of the elections. What impressed me was her vitality and energy after three weeks of constant campaigning. I asked her how long she had been in the PSOE. In the PSOE itself, for three years, but I joined the Agrup-*



"There is no liberation of women without revolution; and there is no revolution without the liberation of women."

## TALKING TO 'A SPANISH DEPUTY

acion Social Universitaria nearly 20 years ago, during the years of clandestinity. During the 60s, I spent five years in exile in France with my husband.

*Why do you think the PSOE is the best party for achieving feminist demands?*

I didn't join the PSOE for its feminism, but because it seemed the best party for achieving a total transformation of society. Its position on feminism leaves much to be desired, but it's less dogmatic

than say the Communist Party (PCE), and that's an advantage as far as feminism is concerned because changes can occur more easily.

*But the Communist Party did give a lot of prominence to women's issues during the election campaign.*

The PCE has been politicising women for a long time, but that does not mean they are feminist. The MDM, set up in the 60s, is independent of the PCE, but controlled by their militants nevertheless. They

weren't feminist at first, by any means, their feminism developed after feminism became popular. It was very literally an opportunistic transformation.

But it must be said that the PCE has changed enormously during the election campaign. I remember at the beginning, when I shared a platform at meetings with Communist Party women, they used to tell me I was using a language that women in the audience would not understand. I told them





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them. Many similarities emerged in our experiences of the sectarianism, economism, narrow conception of Marxism, the resistance to women's ideas and the characterisation of feminist ideas as "bourgeois", the rigid adherence to a formally correct line and the male authority structures that characterise most of the revolutionary left.

Some of the women had come out of this by abandoning a Marxist class analysis and taking up a "Men are the enemy enemy" position. I don't think this is the answer. I feel we have to develop a revolutionary socialist feminist analysis and practice and see class and patriarchy as linked.□

Celia Deacon (Paris and Amsterdam)

*ISIS (the international feminist communication network) will publish the Amsterdam papers. Our thanks to all the women who sold Spare Ribs in Paris.*

#### NEXT MONTH

Report from the Edinburgh Conference TOWARDS A RADICAL FEMINIST THEORY OF REVOLUTION

they understood alright what an abortion was, it's all a question of expressing the issues clearly. If you talk to Communist Party women privately, they will admit quite frankly that their attitudes have changed during the campaign.

*What about women in the PSOE? How many are there, for a start?*

About 15% of the party, which is pretty low, though no one knows how that may have changed as a result of the massive membership campaign around the elections.

The party has a history of defending women. During the Second Republic, it introduced a whole series of reforms, e.g. divorce, without any pressure from women. (I questioned whether anybody had ever given women anything without them having to struggle for it but she insisted.)

Being a minority within the party is a problem. You can't be too aggressive or you'll always lose. It's important not to lose sight of one's long term objectives. One has to hold back and accept compromises. Theoretically, the party is united on feminist issues, but in practice... We have a long way to go.

Last November we formed a work group 'Woman and the Socialist Option' within the information section of the party because we feel the primary need at this stage is to inform people, to produce

propaganda on the woman question. Our task is threefold: to politicise party members on the importance of women, to incorporate women into the party and to persuade women in the party to assume positions of responsibility. When a position has to be filled, not even the women themselves, never mind the men, think they might be capable of taking it on.

*Which feminist demands do you think will be made law in the period after these elections?*

Well, first of all, the right to prescribe and buy contraceptives (at present they can be sold only for 'medical reasons'; birth control is illegal) though whether they will be distributed free on social security depends upon our strength.

Some sort of divorce will be permitted, though whether it remains based upon the concept of guilt or upon consent remains to be seen. The laws on adultery will probably be modified to give women equality with men, but I doubt whether adultery as a crime will be abolished altogether.

*What about abortion?*

If the Left turns out to be as strong as we estimate it is going to be, there should be no problem, except that is from the Left itself. They're quite capable of wanting to postpone abortion for other 'more necessary' reforms, and whilst men are in the majority this problem will persist. The feminist movement is still

relatively weak, which means it is a pressure that can be ignored for the time being. It is far more likely that the laws against homosexuality will be repealed; hostility to homosexuality is not nearly as strong as it is to abortion. *And the long term perspectives?* Our main task is to convince women of their ability and of the need for change. We are a majority, so once all women are convinced, men will inevitably have to change their attitudes.□

#### LISBON

### Cleaners' Union Threatened

The Lisbon city government has marked the third anniversary of the Portuguese Domestic Workers Union (see SR 48) by sending them an eviction notice. They are being ordered to leave the building they occupied in 1975, which houses their union offices, a cooperative laundry and cafeteria, and a dormitory for domestic workers who have been fired from their jobs.

The domestic workers have fought to change their work and living conditions. Organised as a union after the 1974 overthrow of fascism, the women started local branches in all major Portuguese cities. Over 6,000 domestic workers joined participating in activities

which ranged from workers' general assemblies where all major decisions were discussed, to union campaigns in the neighbourhoods to contact domestic workers. This often involved door-to-door knocking and street-meetings.

Throughout 1976, the women held marches, rallies and sit-ins at the Ministry of Labour, insisting on the enactment of work regulations. Top of the list of demands was *at least one day off a week* for domestic workers. They also demanded a national minimum wage of £60 a month; a minimum work age of 14 (girls now begin domestic work at 8 or 9); protection against being fired; decent sleeping quarters and nourishing food. The government continues to stall on passing these regulations.

The Domestic Workers Union has been a member of the Intersindical (Portuguese TUC) from the beginning, but feel they have received no meaningful help. They need our support — send sisterhood messages and financial help to: Sindicato do Servico Domestico, Rua de Sao Bento 337, Lisbon 2, Portugal.□

### WORKING OUT IRELAND

A workshop on Ireland held in London on June 26 was the third in a series of four on the relation between feminism and socialism. "Why should socialist feminists be concerned with Ireland, and how should we organise around this issue?"

The most thought-provoking contributions came from two Irish women, one from Irishwomen United in the South and another from the Andersonstown Women's Group in the North. A slide-show on the history of British involvement in Ireland helped us sort out some of our confused ideas.

The Irish sisters suggested ways in which we could express our solidarity. The woman from the North saw feminist struggle as necessarily linked with the fight against imperialism. With the violence in occupied Ireland, she said the need for refuges and nurseries was desperate; she asked advice on how to set them up. In the South, with censorship, no contraception and heavy unemployment, they want our support in their struggle for an autonomous women's liberation movement.□

Anny Brackx *The Women and Ireland Group*, who organised this conference, are planning a women's delegation to Ireland.



## Starting a shop

In just two years, Cardiff Women's Aid has grown from a small group of enthusiastic women discussing the need for a refuge, to an organisation employing seven workers — with a refuge in Cardiff, one in Barry and another planned for Cardiff.

At first we thought no further than getting a refuge and squeezing in as many battered women and their kids as we could. Soon we realised this wasn't enough. We needed to campaign for changes in housing policy, to support women once they left the refuge and to encourage more women to use Women's Aid simply for information and support. So we decided to take a big step — why not provide a shop? An information centre and meeting-place for women where we could also sell second hand clothes, to raise funds, store furniture and publicise our aims.

We found a shop, open daily (Mon-Fri) 10-6pm. It's getting well-known and becoming a place where women can chat, listen and help each other, as well as further the work of Women's Aid in South Wales. Jane Hutt  
CWA, 2 Coburn St, Cathays.  
Cardiff (23024)

## "Be here now"

Over 60 women from Somerset, Cornwall, Devon and Dorset attended a S.W. regional conference on May 21, organised by Bridgwater Women's Liberation Group. In the opening session news and views were exchanged. In a 'Be Here Now' workshop, which took place outside, the main aim was to become more aware of oneself and the group through physical contact and trust games.

A workshop on 'Rural Women Past and Present' focussed on the need to re-awaken our knowledge of rural skills and crafts that seem to be dying. Later we re-assembled into workshops on sexuality, sex education and the Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign. The final discussion on 'Women and Spirituality' provoked the most interest; a follow-up weekend was arranged for later this summer. Everyone seemed to enjoy the conference: "The atmosphere and unity was extraordinary," said some Exmouth women, "We buzzed all the way home feeling optimistic and strengthened." Bridgwater Women's Group

# 'It's our government and we love it dearly' — LABOUR WOMEN ARGUE IT OUT

The Labour Women's Conference, held in Harrogate's Royal Hall for three days in June, was intimate, intense and contradictory. The 300 delegates from Constituency Labour Parties, affiliated trade unions and the complexity of women's organisations that underpin the Party, at first seemed divided by age. Younger women, in the minority, laid into the government for selling out socialism, enforcing cuts and the social contract, allowing unemployment and unequal pay. This "extremism" — especially of those in the Trotskyist "Militant" group, who call for "nationalisation without compensation under workers' control" and a £65 minimum wage — upset some of the older women, protective of the government — "It is our government and we love it dearly" — and proud of the progress their movement has made — "We're coming out of the black now and up the valley. We've been through years of strife and revolution to get a Labour government, how can we knock them now we've got them?"

But before it reached stalemate the age issue was brought into the open — "When I was 15 and talked about socialism, people would pat me on the head and say I'd learn," said Sandra Horn from Exeter, "Now at twice the age I find it rather galling." Astrid Lever from Finchley recognised that the older women had struggled for years — "The problem is we've been stuck in the same place a long time, and we're still being told to wait."

Not only the young were militant, especially in relation to feminism. A white-haired woman recalled the first meetings of the women's conference when contraception was discussed — the same arguments were used about the "sanctity of life" as came up this time in the abortion debate — "I hope to God we pass this resolution today." They did, calling for a three-line whip on abortion, which would force MPs to vote according to party policy. A very radical resolution was passed on the Health Service, demanding a reversal of all cuts, a service free at the time of use, nationalisation of the drug industry — and recognising that all this would be impossible without more socialist economic policies. The older women particularly were furious about rising prices, which concerned them personally — they wanted an immediate price freeze for at least six months, and fumed about the EEC and its Common Agricultural Policy. "If we can't get back to lower prices, let's cut our losses and get out," said Elsie Sugden from Rotherham. "If there were a referendum today the vote would go that way."

But the Big Boys kept coming to calm them down, surrounded by press, who otherwise ignored the confer-



"We're all very concerned, facing disillusion"

ence. Roy Hattersley, Prices Secretary, explained that it was all much more complicated than the women thought and promised strong pounds and seas of oil just around the corner. Healey was worse. "Can you hear me now muvver," he joked down the failing mike. He put on a Yorkshire accent, played on

sexual innuendoes, flattered, patronised. "You'll be delighted to hear I'm not going to give you a talk about pay policy this afternoon" — "Why not?" came a shout from the back. He tried again — "We've done a lot for the women as women — you've got child benefits (jeers) — on a small scale I know but it's all

PICTURES BY MARK RUSHER (UFL)



## Bill on the brink

As *Spare Rib* goes to press, the Benyon Abortion (Amendment) Bill is in Standing Committee, where seven pro-abortion MPs are fighting to prevent it getting to a Third Reading (if passed there, it would almost certainly become law). But they are in a permanent minority and, with an unsympathetic chair, are faced with the daunting task of talking through almost continuous sittings day and night from July 5 to 15, target date for a Third Reading. After that it'll be too late for the Bill to come up this session, unless the government grants extra time — which is what the anti-abortionists will push for if they fail in committee.

Whatever happens this week, the battle continues. The anti-abortionists won't give up while they feel they have a chance of winning, even though the vast majority of organisations concerned with abortion are against the Bill, entirely or in part.

It has become increasingly clear that availability

of facilities is in the end at least as important as legislation. In other countries where abortion is illegal, women have developed clandestine self-help groups, to take control of their own bodies. Some women are already thinking of doing the same here if Benyon's Bill goes through.

To highlight the lack of facilities we have already, the National Abortion Campaign has called a major demonstration in Birmingham on October 29 to protest against the national low of only 5% NHS abortions in that area. □

Angela Phillips

More details from NAC, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1 (01-485 4303).

Feminists Against Benyon caused a stir in the Commons Committee room on July 13, bursting balloons and letting off streamers and stink bombs. Jo Richardson MP said "At least it gives us a 15 minute break." F.A.B. said, "This committee is a farce. Whatever you decide women will resist and fight." □

◀ Elsie Sugden, decrying price rises  
Sandra Horn: No point in "gratuitous patting on the back" ▶



Lillian Williams

we could afford — you've got Equal Pay and the Sex Discrimination Act." He changed tack — "You've made great sacrifices, and it's about to pay off. So often in the past impatience, the desire for a short cut, has robbed us of the fruits of our labour. If we can hang on for another six months, we've got it made." The appeal to patience and loyalty, such female virtues, won every time. "They put the Tories in to create the chaos and put us in to clear up the mess" — such female work.

**Baking and Cooking**  
What impressed me was how honestly women spoke from their own experience. In the childcare debate several described the "nightmare of anxiety and guilt" in which they worked. "I was fortunate when I brought my children up, I had my mother near," said Lillian Williams of Bridgewater. "But many women haven't and it's hard to provide enough love and time. I'm disgusted with Somerset — we definitely need nursery schools. We're not advancing — we're going back."

But then Eleanor Naburg chipped in — "What's wrong with bringing up your own children? Women of my age had children who were loved

and cared for; when they came home from school there was mum in the kitchen baking and cooking. Why must women go out to work? It's because they want everything at once — a house and a fridge and a car. We were happy to get a little at a time, and there was love in the home and no drop-outs."

This split the floor, with forests of hands in opposition and a lot of applause. They finally voted for adequate childcare facilities and no cuts, but people had taken the attack very personally, and kept taking it up. Jean Travis of APEX for instance said, "I was brought up as one of nine in a big town. Life wasn't so rosy whatever some speakers like to think. I resolved to work to care for my children, but they certainly don't lack love."

The atmosphere got even more heated when Brighton women proposed that the women's conference be ditched — "Frankly it's not taken seriously in the Party." Proud of their tradition, or sure of women's continuing oppression, they resisted. Pat Ludgate, a Labour student, said that from four years in the women's liberation movement she'd learned the need for autonomous women's organisation. Less convincing was Chief Women's Officer Joyce Gould's assurance that "the ministers are made very aware of the views of this conference — they're bullied and lobbied to put them into practice." Still, I was glad they decided to keep their conference. □

Jill Nicholls

## Taking on 'Life'

Harrogate, peaceful conference centre and spa town of the north, was stirred into activity over 'Jubilee' weekend, on the issue of abortion. 'Life', the anti-abortion group, rented a shop front to stage an exhibition of "the unborn friends of the earth" in opposition to a festival of the environment from which they'd been excluded.

It was also an attempt to convince NATFHE (further education teachers' union) delegates at their national conference that 'Life' was a powerful local group, and to lobby against a 'woman's right to choose', to be discussed.

The Harrogate Women's Liberation group and NATFHE sympathisers staged a demo as well as picketing the shop for a day. At one point abuse was flying and a 'Life' supporter (Labour Party member and local journalist) was heard to scream at a puzzled feminist, "It's time you learnt that pleasure stops at the fanny."

For future organisation the Harrogate women's group needs information about conferences to be held there, particularly if abortion or women's rights are to be debated. □ Pat Cochrane  
Contact 7 Park View, Harrogate, North Yorkshire or Harrogate 502336.

## Magic, bras & tiles

★ Magician Morine Vickers from Leicester is taking the Magic Circle to court because it won't let women join. A prizewinner in the International Brotherhood (!) of Magicians, her qualifications aren't disputed. The legal question is whether exclusion hinders her career — she claims you get more gigs (and gags) as a member, but the Circle insists it's not worth joining (very clever). Perhaps she should join a coven and get her own back...

★ Pam Stephens, shop assistant in the jewellery department at Owen's store in Brighton was sacked for not wearing a bra. A woman without a bra still suggests an independence and daring not tolerated in a man's wife/secretary/shop assistant...

★ Penny Ballcock from Derbyshire, who made national news in April as Britain's first female roof tiler, has been sacked already. Her boss Benson says she was a "distraction" to his male workers...

★ Mandy Todd from Norfolk is the first girl to get a sponsored apprenticeship in painting and decorating. Wonder what chance she stands. □



# WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VIBRATORS

As the first company to introduce vibrators into the U.K. and having sold some hundred of thousands, we feel that we know more about them and their use than most.

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The vibrator is designed and is far more effective when used for clitoral stimulation and its undoubted value for this purpose has been well established by Masters and Johnson in their book "An Analysis of Human Sexual Response." In the book they describe how, using a similar device, they were able to bring to orgasm women who have never before reached a climax.

These were extreme cases obviously. Normally, the vibrator is used to provide extra stimulation during love making and is particularly useful where the woman's response tends to be slow. And, of course, it is just as often used purely for personal pleasure.

Finally a word about quality. There are many different makes on the market today, all of similar design, ranging in quality from very good to absolutely useless. We have been selling the same model for seven years and have enough confidence in it to offer you our special 'money refund' service if you are not satisfied.

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## Classified events



## conferences

● **ALTERNATIVE SOCIALISM CONFERENCE** at Lauriston Kirkcuds. 13th-20th August. The main theme is: "Patriarchy: what it is, the damage it does, the struggle against it, and ideas beyond." Cost: £2.80 a day, half price for children and reductions for claimants. There will be childcare. Information and suggestions: Danny Cohen, 15 Rosslyn Hill, London NW3.

## work offered

● **BELT AND BRACES ROAD-SHOW COMPANY** require fulltime Administrator with experience in Arts Council Liaison/Accounts etc. Telephone Carole Spedding 01-485 2872

● **SOLICITOR or BARRISTER** required by HILLINGDON COMMUNITY LAW CENTRE. Main emphasis on case work. Apply in writing with c.v. to 63 Station Road, Hayes, Middlesex. Closing date August 1st.

● This summer: fancy bricklaying? Working on building site alongside experienced craftsmen and younger women/men from Liverpool and rest of the world? Or taking part in playscheme, summer theatre, sharing in housekeeping, admin? Hard work... long hours... lot of fun. Food/accommodation provided with 1 month stay — communal living — wage negotiable after six months. The Blackie, Great George Street, Liverpool 1, 051-709 5019

● **Experimental College** seeks faculty member (pref. female), familiar with London social action, able to facilitate undergrad. study projects in London. Experience more important than academic qualifications. Sense of humour essential. Apply stating full C.V., range of interests to FWC, White Hart Street, Aylsham Norfolk.

## work wanted

● Graduate, feminist (legal background) seeks position. Interested public relations, driving, research/P.A. work. Box 617

● **CHRISTIAN FEMINIST** 1977 graduate (theology, Cambridge) seeks interesting work Leeds/area October 1977-? Non-driving, non-secretarial, living wage essential. Box 614

## accommodation offered

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● Woman student 30's, 3 school age children, seeks flat or space in house N. London sharing with similar. Stella, Box 6100

● Woman student 29 looking for place to share North London from September. Box 618

● London: room in friendly house wanted for feminist student from October. Please ring Jane 01-828 8244

● Black socialist woman and child seek accommodation in North London. Phone 01-986 8734

● Family would like to rent or buy in large house near other family/s. Daughters 5 and 3. S/W London preferred but not essential. Phone Tonie or Ian 01-947 5463

● Woman seeking share in friendly house/flat from September in Manchester. Please ring Annie: Sheffield 666511

● North London: woman needs accommodation mid-August, feminist household. Box 611

● Leicester: accommodation wanted by female post-grad. Jeni Stewart, 6a Queen Street, Lissiemouth, Moray

● Two feminists require room each in friendly house in South London from September. Ring Marian Brighton 722547

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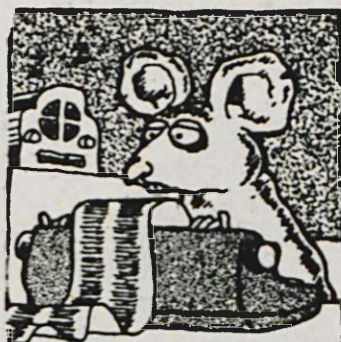
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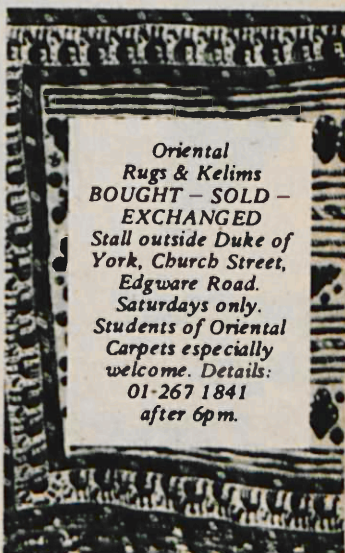
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●**'A WOMAN'S PLACE'**, 42 Earlham St (01-836 6081). Open 10am–10pm weekdays and 10am–6pm Saturdays. Feminist information centre and meeting place. Books, publications, weekly newsletter (10p per copy or 15p by post), posters, women's group list, referral services, coffee and talk. Run by open collective which meets Tuesdays 7.30pm.

●**WOMEN'S RESEARCH AND RESOURCES CENTRE** information exchange, library and meeting place for people doing research on women and feminist concerns. Their bi-monthly newsletter lists and reviews latest publications, seminars and meetings held by them and others, and the latest gives details of women's studies courses running in Britain. Sub. annually £5, or what you can afford. WRRRC, 158 North Gower St, London NW1. Tel 01-388 0882

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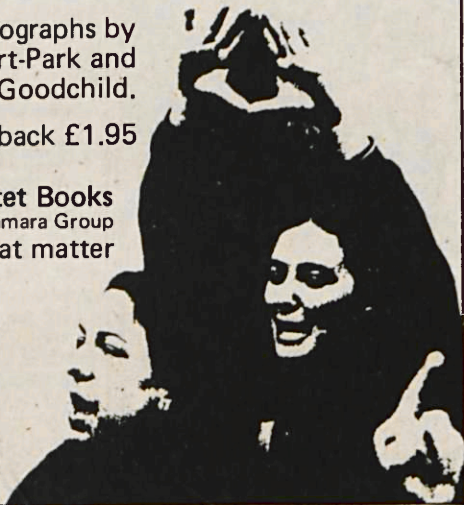
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●Interested in starting group Mortlake/Putney area? Ring Irene, 01-878 6613 evenings

●HARPENDEN girls and women for socialist feminist discussion and activity group. Contact Linda, 05827 64418 evenings

●ROMAN CATHOLIC feminists interested in forming groups to overcome discrimination WITHIN the Church, Box 6104

●I am interested in joining or forming group. Newcastle area. Ring Sheelagh, Ebchester 884.

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Feminist therapists Susie Orbach and Luise Eichenbaum arrived in London from the USA a year ago and founded the Women's Therapy Centre.

Cathy Haw and Rosie Parker talk to them about the centre and ask how their feminism shapes the therapy they provide.



MICHAEL ANN MULLEN

Workers at the Women's Therapy Centre, London

*Do you think conventional therapy is based on a particular set of values, and can you say how feminist therapy differs?* Conventional therapy "treats" people in an attempt to cure their "sickness". It's like you've got the flu so you go to bed, you've got a virus so you're given a shot, you've got a mental illness and it can be cured either by medication or by looking at what's causing your problem and by learning to accept your situation.

Feminist therapy is really different in that it sees the causes of people's distress have to do with the very situation conventional therapy is trying to press them back into.

*How would a feminist therapist and a conventional therapist respond to the same woman's conflicts and distress?* The crudest things people hear about conventional therapists are often true. Take, for example, a woman who goes for a career and then has conflicts about being a mother. The conventional therapist would respond by saying, "Give up your career, you are trying to be a man." The goal of therapy would be for the woman to redevelop her "femininity",

become more passive, softer, and her therapist would probably consider the therapy successful if she settled down with her husband and had children.

We'd address issues in therapy for the woman in a very different way — we'd ask very different questions. Faced with someone who is trying to struggle with a career, love and motherhood, we wouldn't take the position that these things are easily negotiable. We wouldn't say, "Just give one up." We would explore with the woman how she feels about the conflicts without the aim of resolving them — we don't think they are resolveable through therapy — but so that she knows she's not "crazy" for experiencing these conflicts, so that she knows she's carrying a bloody burden as a woman in contemporary Britain. We would then look for possibilities within the situation and how she can best act on her own behalf.

*Conventional therapists may project their own values onto their clients, but aren't you afraid of applying feminist generalisations to individual women's experience? To put it crudely, if a woman says to you*

# feminist therapists talking



"Why do I feel empty?" isn't the temptation to reply "Oh yes, all women feel empty."

No. We'd explore the emptiness for this particular woman — what it means — and it's going to have all different kinds of meanings. But there would be a warmth, an understanding, in responding to her question that would be missing if you weren't sympathetic to the particular struggles of women. A traditional shrink would say, "Have a baby to fill up that space." We wouldn't withhold a feminist interpretation but we wouldn't jump in with it in a dogmatic way. We're not trying to fit women into a new mould of correct feminist behaviour.

*Feminist therapy sounds a bit pessimistic — more like support than a force for change.*

We do think feminist therapy can effect change — a certain amount of personal change. But we'd argue that Growth Movement therapists are over optimistic about the possibilities for personal change. This is because they've failed to appreciate the indivisibility of the person from their social context. This is true for orthodox psychoanalysis too. We don't think the world is as self-centred as they would have it.

*What then are the goals of feminist therapy?*

Women often suffer distress because both the attempt to live up to society's view of female adulthood or to reject it are difficult. Individuals do experience enormous suffering, alienation, powerlessness. In therapy we expose the particular conflicts and locate their sources in the family and within the present social structure. Therapy is a way to understand what has been experienced within the family, and the Women's Liberation Movement has shown that the family is both the source and the institution that maintains our oppression. We examine the experience of a little girl growing up in a sexist society. We concentrate on how the "outside" got "inside", or to put it another way, how our own psychological development makes us unwittingly cooperate in our own oppression.

*How does your therapy enable someone to get in touch with what happened to them within the family and the way it affects their later life?*

The therapeutic relationship itself becomes a way of understanding because within the relationship we are recreating, reproducing our needs, dependencies, anger, strengths, pain. So the way to see what happened to a person is in the therapeutic relationship — how the two of us are relating — in conjunction with the woman giving examples of what's going on in other relationships as well. This can happen in a group or in a one-to-one relationship.

*How will your feminist perspective shape your understanding of what's happening? Our feminist perspective helps us understand adaptations that girls must make within family relationships and ones that*

women find themselves making currently. For example, women are often scared to stand up for themselves with their lovers because they are terrified of being abandoned. As little girls they learned to be passive, accommodating, nice, and not to be directly assertive. Girls' attempts at a wider range of expressions are inhibited, and as children we begin to feel that parts of us are acceptable — "good girls" — and that other parts are really unacceptable. Later, in intimate relationships, there's a possibility for sharing these hidden parts of ourselves but at the same time there's a fear of bringing out the "unacceptable" aspects in case the person who now cares for us rejects us for it as our parents did before. Trying to change the "script" is an enormous effort and women find themselves replaying old patterns again and again, being indirect, non-assertive and suffering for it.

This brings up another issue we work on in the therapy; having adapted to a vision of ourselves as powerless, or only being able to survive by being indirect, the idea of seeing oneself as entitled to and possessing power is mind-blowing. A feminist therapist is perhaps the first person who will encourage a woman to see herself as able to act for herself in the world. And once you can see that, you can ask yourself, "What is at risk in this situation? What if I see myself as someone who has a choice, who actually could assert myself?" We also do not negate or under-estimate the objective realities which may very well be critical and not supportive to a woman who fights back.

*Do you also expose in therapy how a woman's unconscious formation — her sense of powerlessness — is reinforced and reflected by her position in society?*

**"When you are  
powerless you  
have a lot of  
feelings that  
would be too  
dangerous to  
express"**

Yes. Supposing a woman is having a really hard time at work with her boss, we'll talk about it from the point of view that her boss likes giving her a hard time and that she's in an unequal relationship, but we'd also talk about who that boss represents — the power the boss represents inside her head — so that when she's dealing with the boss, not only is she in a hierarchical situation but she also believes she has no rights in that situation. Her conscious mind might be saying, "I should be asserting myself," but another part is saying, "I don't have the right to assert myself, he's older, he's the boss, he's a man, this is the way the world is, this is the kind of world I've absorbed."

Now in therapy we challenge the idea that it has to be like that just because it is like that, but we would go further. We would say that behind the structure she has in her head — that he's the boss and she's the victim — she's been further disenfranchised by not having her rage. When you are powerless you have a lot of feelings which would be much too dangerous to express. For example, women expressing rage inside the family are often taken to their GP or psychiatrist and given drugs to calm them down. In therapy we would have her reach those feelings behind the powerlessness — which might be rage — and to bring those feelings into her view, so she sees herself as potentially fighting back.

*You said just now that you see the family as one source of women's feelings of powerlessness. Could you explain what you mean?*

Feminist therapy has an understanding of how subordination gets transmitted in the family. Mothers have the really horrible job of teaching their daughters to be second class citizens. That's where we think a woman learns to act against herself, or rather, learns to unwittingly cooperate in her own subordination.

*Do you think that the mother/daughter relationship is responsible for the fear of abandonment so many women live with?*

Yes. In her development the girl child has the difficult task of learning to be female in this culture. To learn to be female means she must become like her mother. To become like her mother, means she must give up her mother, give up being cared for and learn to take care of others. We often find we become our mother's mother and give her what she never got as a little girl, and so on. So being dependent, being cared for, is something we experience for a very short time.

*Yet the Women's Liberation Movement emphasises that women are the dependent ones in society.*

Economically, yes, women are expected to be dependent, but we are the ones who are expected to give emotional support. Men are not taught to be caring. And learning to give instead of to get is just one part of our role, we learn to give in order to get.

In therapy sessions we've been able to observe how much of an issue "giving" and "getting" is for women. Just one



therapy session seems so self indulgent that it becomes an issue in itself. Women have a fear of receiving this kind of interest without being able to use familiar ways of reciprocating. We often fear that we won't be taken care of and so we "oil the works" and facilitate interactions in our relationships.

And although we may often tell our lovers (particularly male lovers) that they don't know how to give, or don't give enough, listening to women in therapy we realise that because they are not used to receiving, when the lover makes a move towards them they reject or cut it short. Even with all this aching and yearning for attention, often when we get it we feel insatiable or only aware of how much we feel we may have to repay — whether it takes place in therapy or other love relationships.

This feeling that you have to really work for anything you get goes along with a very tragic sense of being too undeserving to receive. Within the therapy relationship these ideas come up and are worked through.

*Do you think that people can transfer the things they learn in therapy to everyday life, and — in particular — to political action?*

Yes, that question brings in the whole dynamic we've touched upon, that is, feelings of powerlessness in capitalist society. As we've said, feminist therapy attempts to question and explore these feelings and to uncover their roots in material conditions — by which we mean the ideological as well as economic structure.

Inside the therapy relationship there is support; needs which are usually denied — whether by others or by ourselves — can be accepted and legitimised. Once we develop the confidence that we "deserve" to receive, and that we can make demands, we can enter "outside" situations with a new feeling of strength. In the same way that we are learning to assert ourselves in personal relationships, so we believe that assertion carries into our work as activists in political groups.

As we've said, therapy has limitations. It is not The Answer. We can't change the nature of our day-to-day lives individually. Individual assertion and strength can only contribute to necessary social change.

*What about other issues you might take a political view of, or consider doing something about? Take selection. Traditionally therapists select clients who are young, educated, highly verbal, middle class and "attractive". How do you confront the problem of selection?*

We are experiencing enormous pressure. We are a tiny centre that's broke. Until we get funding, the people who come to us are self-selected. GP's, social services, the Tavistock, a NHS clinic in Hampstead, North London, and similar places only refer women to us very occasionally, so we don't have access to a very broad range of people. However, we do see everyone who rings up for an initial meeting, and discuss with them whether

## "We're not trying to fit women into a new mould of correct feminism"

the centre can provide what they want. If so, we put people on a dated waiting list so that as soon as one of the workers has time — there are six of us altogether; only two of us are full time — the next person can start therapy. We also attempt to refer women, that is, suggest other therapists, because we are unhappy about the waiting list. However, there are few places to suggest, because of political perspectives and/or fees.

*You've said before that you're not very happy working outside the National Health Services.*

Yes, we feel that if the Women's Therapy Centre was incorporated into the NHS — at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, for example — that would be ideal. But inside or outside the NHS we're aiming to have an impact on the mental health establishment. We believe that existing as a centre in and of itself calls attention to the issue of women and mental health.

While the Centre's resources are so limited, we can't be very ambitious. We'd like to see Women's Therapy Centres set up throughout Britain, a referral service of feminist therapists and conferences for people involved with therapy to provide support for radical therapists who are isolated in their jobs.

We've also been considering how to develop a training programme for women who'd like to work as therapists. At the moment we provide feminist supervision — a method of instruction in which psychotherapists can discuss their work from a feminist perspective. Then there's a series of seminars for workers in the mental health field, to discuss the relationship between politics and therapy, and where we try to get both a political and a therapeutic perspective on the themes which come up for women in therapy.

We also hold one-off workshops at the Centre, on Co-counselling for example,

Gestalt, Bio-energetic massage, and pre-organic groups.

We get an enormous amount of correspondence from women wanting workshops, information, referrals, self-help ideas and articles. So right now we act as a catalyst for a lot of activity.

*Working class people tend to be treated with drugs and behavioural therapies as opposed to the more verbal psychotherapies and psychoanalysis. Do you have anything to say about this, and do you make any attempt to reach working class women?*

It's definitely true that working class people are more consistently "treated" with drugs and ECT. The mental health system refuses to look at the sources of their distress because to do so would reveal the real cause of their misery. People go crazy because the social system is so rotten. Drug therapy and ECT aim to contain — to blot out rage and pain. We've attempted to reach different people through our coverage in the non-movement media. At the moment, about fifty women come to the centre for individual therapy. Just under half these women have not been involved with the women's liberation movement and have come through coverage on Radio London, local newspapers, etc. The other women are mainly activists in the WLM.

*One therapeutic ethic, backed up by psychological research, suggests that a person only values what they pay for. This is obviously a very convenient rationale for selection through payment. How do you feel about this?*

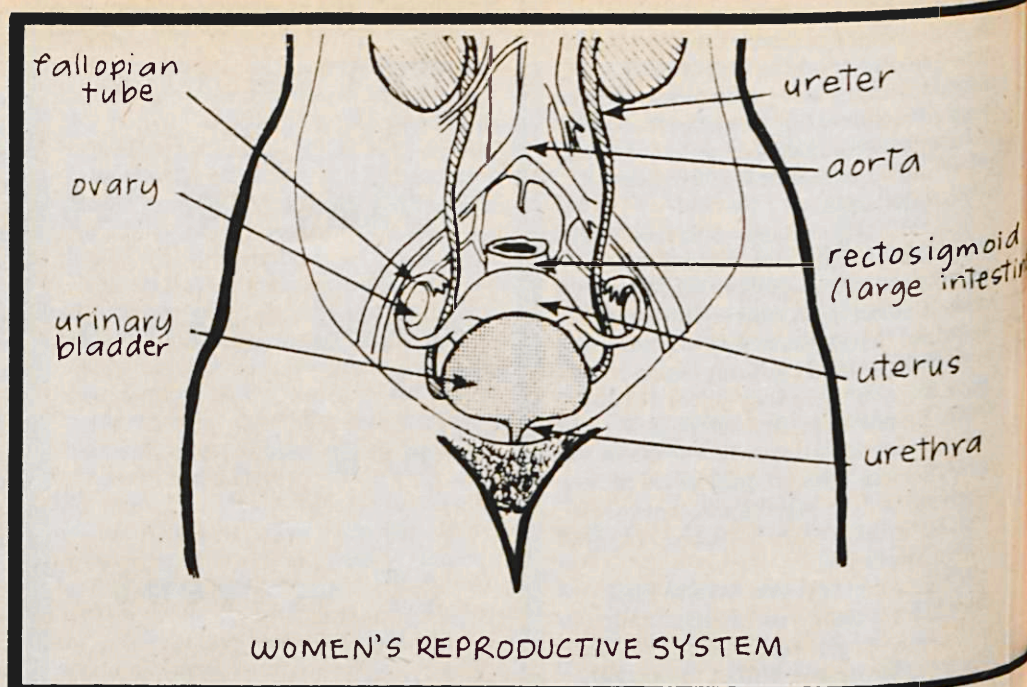
We feel this is nonsense. We've both worked in clinics where there is no payment. This has no negative effect on therapy. It's an idea used to perpetuate the class system and to keep shrinks rich. In fact we not only hate that argument for its general political persuasion but also because women paying for therapy is in direct contradiction to the theory of feminist therapy — we point out that women always have to give in order to receive — and payment only perpetuates that experience.

*One final question — do you think there are any dangers in therapy?*

Well, at the risk of repeating ourselves, we say first off that we see enormous dangers in conventional psychotherapy. If you see the individual as "sick", then you are seeking to re-adjust them, to get them to accept limited roles and an individual way of change. The interpretations that are offered under this rubric can be extremely damaging, and the feeling of powerlessness a person has can be reinforced by the therapy relationship. Also, the person in therapy may be encouraged to commit a major part of her energy to it, thus denying other sources of strength and change. We haven't felt these problems apply to feminist therapy. We think many of the things we've talked about today in terms of the theories and practices of feminist therapy, change the potentially reactionary nature of the work to a progressive, constructive experience for women. □



We worked on this article in a small group. None of us knew much about Salpingitis to start with, but through reading, and talking with women, and using some very helpful personal accounts of the illness, we've been able to gain quite a lot of knowledge and understanding. Preparing this article has shown us that as women we can learn together about subjects that are normally mystified by the medical profession. We hope that sharing this knowledge will be of help to other women.



# SALPINGITIS

Salpingitis (Salp.) is an inflammation of the Fallopian Tubes, which carry eggs from the ovaries to the uterus (womb).

## What are the symptoms?

Salp. seems to occur with varying degrees of severity, and for simplicity's sake these are divided into three types. This division is only a guideline.

**ACUTE:** This is a sharp attack of cramps, like abdominal pains, either on both sides or covering the whole pelvic area. It can easily be mistaken for a ruptured ectopic pregnancy (see below), or appendicitis.

"I was in agony. A GP called fairly soon and found a high temperature and thought it was appendicitis — called an ambulance."

Pain is often accompanied by fever of 100–102°F, and chills. Sometimes there is vomiting or nausea, a rapid pulse and headaches. The back wall of the vagina is often so painful that examination can only be done under general anaesthetic.

**SUBACUTE:** This is similar but there are milder attacks over a period of time — say, several weeks or months.

"I suspected that I had salpingitis a few days after Christmas. Just before Christmas I had a temperature and bellyache and felt that I probably had some sort of gut infection. This also coincided with my period coming and a mild bout of diarrhoea, so I felt

thoroughly confused." She did not get a diagnosis for a further 10 days. It often coincides with the beginning of a period, or when the body resistance is low and risk of infection subsequently high. Menstruation is often disturbed with lighter, or heavier or irregular periods. There is often low backache, and pain during sexual intercourse or sexual arousal, or after any exertion.

"It was lower abdominal cramping pain and I experienced tenderness low down on both sides. I had a reasonable appetite but felt weak and debilitated. I found it hurt to make love . . . so I stopped. The pain was less in the morning after rest but awful after exertion."

Pain is often relieved by rest. There can be vaginal discharge, which can also be associated with the presence of gonorrhea (see below). There can be swelling of the lymph nodes, noticeable under the armpits, in the breasts, groin and neck. Again there is a fever, but this is lower than with acute Salp., usually around 99°F. If untreated, subacute Salp. can develop to an acute stage.

**CHRONIC:** The Fallopian Tube becomes twisted and sealed off with scar tissue, stretched and swollen with pus, and this can cause sterility, or ectopic pregnancy.

## Causes

The infections that cause Salp. are bacteria such as E.coli, gonococci (as in gonorrhea), streptococci, salmonella. These can be transmitted in four main ways:

1 via the blood, e.g. TB in other parts

- of the body;
- from adjacent abdominal organs, e.g. appendix or colon;
- via the lymphatic vessels in the broad ligaments which support the uterus;
- upwards from the uterus, cervix or vagina.

The last two are the most common, and can follow any disturbance of the uterus such as childbirth, abortion or IUD insertion. Almost anything inside the vagina can provide a passage for infection, e.g. menstrual blood, sperm, vaginal mucus, vaseline, talc, IUD strings. The IUD itself forms a focus for infections in the uterus (which is normally self-cleansing).

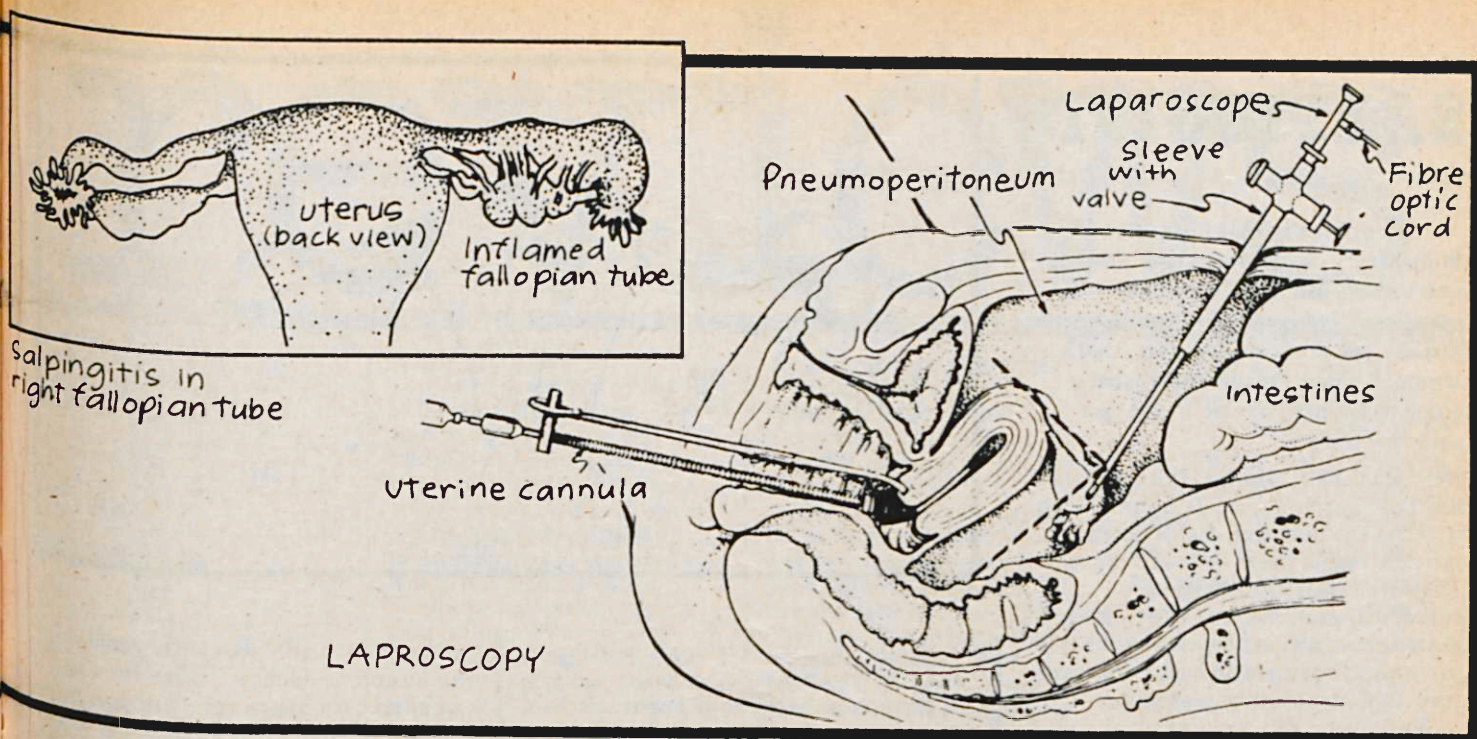
"I went to my GP who said he thought it was probably something to do with my coil, and I should go to the family planning clinic as he couldn't deal with such things."

But the greatest danger with the IUD is on insertion, which should never take place when any abnormal condition, including Thrush, is present. Doctors usually consider the first 30 days after insertion the most dangerous. Women who have not had children are more prone to infection, because the IUD is more difficult to insert, and the uterus does not drain as freely through the cervical canal. In the *British Medical Journal* (25.9.76) it was quoted that, compared with non-users, IUD users were estimated to have about five times the risk of contracting pelvic infection.

**GONORRHEA:** With the rise in gonorrhea, the incidence of Salp. caused by it has increased. The World Health Organisation produced a



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by Archway Women's Health Group

report in 1960 saying that 10% of all cases of women with gonorrhea contract Salp. In 50% of women who remain untreated for gonorrhea in the first 8-10 weeks, the bacteria travels to the uterus. The gonococci do not easily survive on the womb lining except during menstruation when the bacteria can multiply rapidly in the dead cells and discharged blood of the uterine lining. During menstruation the infection can quickly spread up the sides of the uterus, and into the Fallopian Tubes. Women with Salp. through gonorrhea often have a heavy vaginal discharge.

## Diagnosis

Salp. is very easily confused with other things, e.g. gonorrhea, appendicitis, and it is just as easily under-diagnosed, e.g. pelvic congestion, or 'healing pains'.

"It started with cystitis-like symptoms and when I went to my doctor she said I had a discharge and vaginal infection."

"My GP said she didn't think I had Salpingitis, she didn't examine me... she said I was delicate there and it was just healing pains. She also said that she thought maybe I was tense, and asked me questions about my sex life."

Diagnosis should be on the basis of tests as well as observation. Doctors should feel for swellings, but should also take a culture to determine which bacteria is causing Salp. so that the correct antibiotic can be prescribed. But gonorrhea can be missed in pelvic swabs, so it is advisable to get a white

cell count taken, as this will indicate a general infection. However, this is only reliable if you are otherwise healthy. You must be sure to tell your doctor if you have or have had gonorrhea or an IUD fitted.

**LAPROSCOPY:** To confirm the diagnosis, people doing research into Salp. use laparoscopy on suspected sufferers. Under either a general or local anaesthetic, a needle is passed under the skin of the woman's abdomen. After piercing deeper structures in the abdomen, about four pints of carbon dioxide are blown in through the needle. This distends the abdomen. A telescope may then be inserted, and all the abdominal organs - ovaries, tubes and uterus - examined. Sometimes a dye is measured and introduced into the womb via a syringe through the vagina and cervix; during this process, the cervix is held still with a clamp. The dye is allowed to filter through the Fallopian Tubes and if it reaches the other end, the tubes are clear, if it doesn't this shows they're blocked. When the procedure is over the gas is allowed to escape from the abdominal cavity. The operation involves a cut about 1 centimetre long near the navel: the wound heals within a week and in most cases is invisible. A laparoscopy is recommended when there is doubt about the diagnosis, but it may be slightly uncomfortable.

## Treatment

Doctors prescribe antibiotics, but some strains of, for example, gonorrhea are resistant to them.

Diathermia, or heat treatment, is

thought to increase the blood supply to the infected area, and this helps fight infection. It relieves pain, the infection is drawn out and discharge increases. Heat treatment should not be done during menstruation, because it clots the blood, or if there is any possibility of cancer, as it increases the rate of growth. A hot water bottle can be used at home as a gentle form of heat treatment. It is important that women with Salp. take it easy. Worry produces tension and cramping in the area of infection and reduces blood flow. It thus prevents the body's own antibodies from reaching the infection, so bed rest and relaxation are essential.

Many herbs are useful for gynaecological problems. These include Ladies Mantle, Raspberry Leaf - made into tea - and anything containing Jasmine - tea, oil, incense. Powdered Slippery Elm Bark is described as a 'whole woman herb', and can alleviate breast pains, period pains, uterus, etc. It can be made into tea or sprinkled onto food. (In London such herbs can be obtained from G. Baldwin & Co., 173 Walworth Road, SE17. Tel: 01-703 5550.)

## Outcome

Since giving us her personal account of an attack, one woman who had been given the impression by her doctor that her Salp. had cleared up has suffered another attack. She had had continued pain but her doctor "says it often takes months to clear up". This highlights the importance of finishing treatment, and ensuring that the infection is cured. Women should be aware of the possibility of recurrence,



# SALPINGITIS

and not dismiss pain. Another woman wrote:

"It's not really that it's a great horror story, it just wears you down, you know. You just stop asking questions. Two years it's been. They just say 'we don't really know what's wrong: we don't really know what's going to happen, but we'll give you some painkillers'."

**INFERTILITY:** The infection can wall itself off in a Fallopian Tube and block it. After the infection drains down into the vagina these walls can remain. They are called membranous adhesions, and can block the tubes and prevent conception. Twenty to thirty percent of women who have Salp. have their tubes blocked by scar tissue.

Two operations are possible:

- a) to unblock the tubes. The surgeon can tease open the end of the tube nearest the ovary, in an operation called salpingostomy. About one third of women who have had this operation become fertile.
- b) re-implantation of the tubes. The surgeon can cut out the blockage and re-implant the healthy part of the tube in the womb. However, diagnosis to find the blockage is difficult because tubes (like any other muscle) can go into spasm which resembles a block. Good idea to get a second opinion about the advisability of such an operation.

After cure the pelvic organs sometimes never fully recover. There may still be some mild abdominal pain, which may be worse during menstruation or sexual intercourse, or with fatigue or constipation. If there is severe pain the only relief may be through surgery.

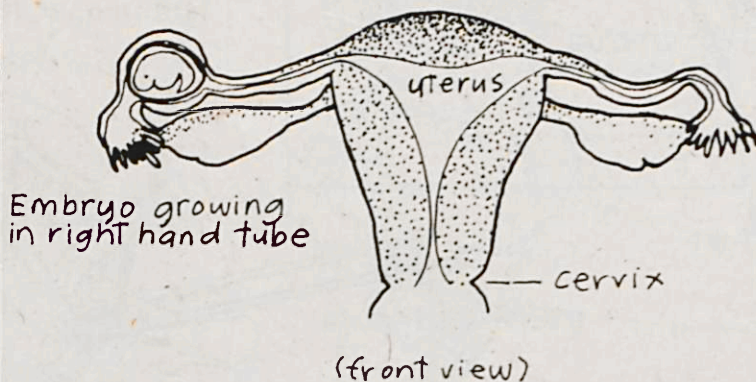
## ECTOPIC PREGNANCY:

"On internal examination I was terrifically tender and it was thought I had a tubal pregnancy, so I was operated on within a few hours."

If the tubes are narrowed or kinked by Salp. this may cause problems as the ovum may enter the damaged tube from the ovary, and become fertilised there. If the tube is then too narrow, the egg becomes caught and cannot move down to the uterus. It develops in the tube but the walls of the tube are too thin to support the embryo.

The first symptoms of an ectopic pregnancy are the same as for normal pregnancy — missed period, breast swelling, changes in appetite, etc. Within two weeks of the missed period there may be some light spotting or menstrual-like flow, which is often mistaken for a normal but late period. Most women feel mild to moderate cramp on one side of the lower abdomen. At this stage an operation should be done to remove the tube before it bursts.

## Ectopic Pregnancy



As the embryo develops it weakens and stretches the tube, and after two or three months the tube bursts, causing severe internal bleeding. The woman often feels a sharp stabbing pain in the lower abdomen, which becomes bloated and tender. There can be fainting, a feeling of diarrhoea, and a lower temperature than normal. If the woman does not receive immediate medical care, including surgery to remove the ruptured tube and transfusions to replace lost blood, she may die. Women who have had Salp. should be aware of the early symptoms of ectopic pregnancy, to be sure of early treatment.

Because of the danger of ectopic pregnancy, it is advisable for women who have had Salp. to avoid using an IUD. This is because coils stop implantation of a fertilised egg in the uterine lining, rather than the initial fertilisation of the egg. They should use instead either the Pill, which prevents ovulation, or a combination of two other methods preventing fertilisation, i.e. cap or Durex and some form of spermicide. The FPA told us that it was perfectly alright to use the Pill after Salp. provided that the infection was completely cleared up, as there is a reaction between antibiotics and the Pill which reduces the efficacy of the latter.

## Prevention

If you have an IUD it's important to have regular checks to make sure that you are free from infection. A speculum is useful to detect the most common of these (thrush, trichomonas, NSU). Use no talc, vaginal lubricants, etc. that might transmit infection. Always use water-based lubricants like K-Y jelly, rather than Vaseline (which tends to stay in the vagina).

After going to the toilet, wipe from front to back, as infection can be transmitted from faeces.

Douching does not help to clear infections, and can sometimes be harmful. A recent study by Newman & Cherney in the USA found that 90% of women with gynaecological or pelvic problems, or inflammations

of the Fallopian Tubes, were habitual and vigorous douchers, often from an early age. Among women without these infections, only 18% were in the habit of douching more than once a week.

## Conclusion

Salp. can be a very serious disease with lasting consequences. Women should insist on thorough diagnosis and full treatment, including tests to make sure it has been fully cured. Doctors can stigmatise sufferers from diseases associated with VD, sexual activity, or caused by contraception.

"I was in hospital for two weeks: I was never told the name of the infection. My father asked and was told . . . no one ever told me of the dangers of sterility, and I was always treated as if I was only a body to be poked and was not human . . . I could not sleep with men for many months afterwards." (. . . due to guilt etc. induced by the whole procedure. Ed.)

Remember, at some stages in the process, it is possible to go to another doctor — register as a Temporary Patient, etc., if it gets too bad! □

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Thanks for contribution and comment to Jane, Marie, Ann, Olivia, Louise, Kim, Sue, Pixi and Mika. From Liz, Julia, Sue and Ruth . . .

Archway Women's Health Group is part of Hornsey Women's Centre, 147 Archway Road, London N6. We hold open workshops on self-help health on the first Saturday of every month at 2-3pm. The group is also willing to demonstrate self-examination to other women's groups in the North London area.



# reviews

## BOOKS

### THE UNRETOUCHED WOMAN

Photographs by

Eve Arnold

(Jonathan Cape, £7.95)

An Afghani mother, faceless behind her all-enveloping veil, strides down a Kabul street on a shopping expedition, her child perched shoulder high. A tiny hand clings on for dear life while another almost equally small tugs the veil sideways, demanding attention. Islamic culture forbids us to see her face as she goes on her way, yet her situation is one to which all women can relate. It is this universality of woman's experience with which Eve Arnold is occupied in *The Unretouched Woman*, a collection of images shot during 25 years of assignments for the world's leading magazines.

The photographs cannot be faulted in general terms. The problem is that Eve Arnold is essentially a sympathetic photographer rather than a radical one. Her involvement with women is deep, a fact especially obvious from her intimate studies of Marilyn Monroe and the aging Joan Crawford engaged in a day-long beauty ritual, but it is hard to escape the connections between the appearance of this book and a receptive market.

As the daughter of Russian immigrants growing up in the Depression in America, Arnold had firsthand experience of poverty and deprivation. Whenever she encountered it — in South Africa, in the Deep South — her approach was sympathetic and understanding. Hollywood's image of woman, she says, was equally familiar to her, with subjects posed in the most flattering position and cosmeticised until "Everything that life deposited was penciled out." Thus, when she photographed the movie queens, it was the unretouched woman she

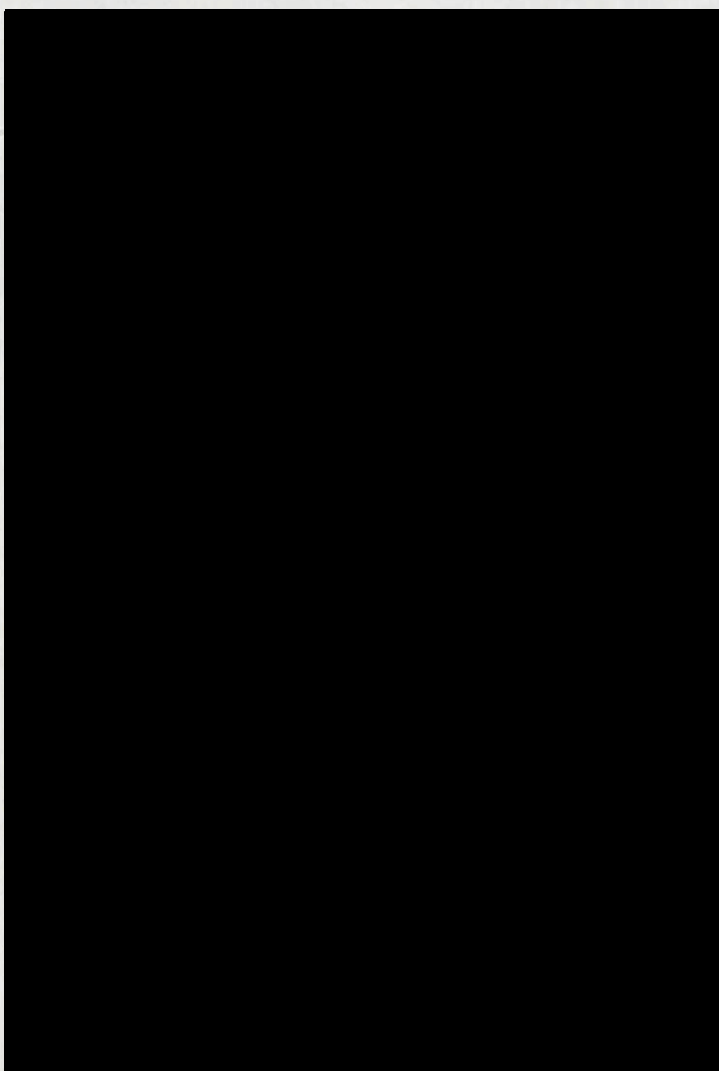
sought to depict.

Her photographs of the vulnerable Monroe are superb, and here the text plays an important part in our understanding of what we are seeing. Without words a picture is open to many interpretations, a fact about which photographers are becoming increasingly aware. Despite Arnold's concern with accurate captioning, too often the explanatory text is separated from the actual images. This results in unconnected images following each other, giving little insight into the experience of the individual. The cover shot, for example, taken in the Valley of the Kings in Upper Egypt, appears to be included only for the startling colour of the subject's eyes; it tells us absolutely nothing about the person. And scenes of flagellation at a lesbian

wedding are included without adequate explanation, appearing amid all this universality to imply a behavioural norm which just does not exist.

Arnold's skill is exceptional and ensures that she will always come back with a good batch of shots. But is this enough? For her, obviously it is. She gives us what she considers to be a positive look at the world's women, she does nothing to reinforce stereotypes, but by portraying what is, in effect, the "off-duty" stereotype — i.e. woman caught in her "natural state" — she does little to alter the prevailing view. And that's a pity. By choosing *not* to make a statement, Eve Arnold, her own protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, implies an acceptance of the way things stand.

Val Wilmer



*Within the Women's Liberation Movement opinions are divided as to whether or not there was ever a matriarchy. Evelyn Reed's Women's Evolution is a key source for the pro-matriarchy argument. Spare Rib asked the London Matriarchy Study Group to look again at the book.*

### WOMEN'S EVOLUTION

from Matriarchal Clan to

Patriarchal Family

by Evelyn Reed

(Pathfinder £3.15)

Was a matriarchal system the original form of social organisation? Was there a period in history — or pre-history — when women held a leading place? When women were responsible for economic, social development and sacred rites? When women and men worshipped deities through priestesses with the Mother Goddess as chief deity?

Yes, says Evelyn Reed in *Women's Evolution*. She maintains that the matriarchal clan system was the basic social unit from time immemorial; that the modern father-family, arriving through a transition via matrilineal organisation, appeared only at the beginning of the "civilised" epoch.

She takes as her base the work of the 19th century rationalists and Marxists, from Bachofen and Morgen through Engels to Briffault. These investigators postulated a matriarchal system where, she says, "members of both sexes enjoyed equality and did not suffer oppression or discrimination."

Engels in *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* discusses the "three epochs of social evolution from savagery, through to barbarism to civilisation." Savagery he suggests was based on hunting and food gathering, barbarism on food production through agriculture and stock raising,



# reviews

while civilisation came to the world in terms of commodity production, distribution and exchange.

Evelyn Reed begins her investigation with the epoch of savagery but points out that the term can be misunderstood: "Savagery is simply a designation for our earliest ancestors. Without their colossal achievements over a million years, humanity would not have walked the last mile to civilisation."

Anthropologists today, for the most part, reject the existence of a prehistoric matriarchy, while admitting that matrilineal kinship (inheritance and descent via the mother with power usually in the hands of the mother's brother) still prevails today.

Led by Levi Strauss they state that no-one has ever authenticated a single case of a true matriarchy. Previous material, they claim, was based on hearsay, missionaries' stories and the like. They incline to a theory that women, like cattle, were a valuable means of exchange and barter between warring groups of men. They believe that the incontrovertible evidence of Goddess worship — figurines, paintings and widespread symbolic material — is an expression of a form of myth, an acting out of fears and beliefs, secondary to the male-based business of acquiring land for survival. And, they say, that in the absence of matriarchal forms in today's primitive tribes, no-one can produce a theory that satisfactorily explains economic and social organisation within a matriarchy.

Evelyn Reed offers such a theory drawing on current anthropological data and dealing with primitive sex taboos and cannibalism. She challenges the idea that the ancient taboo on sexual intercourse with certain relatives arose out of a universal fear of incest. Instead, she says, it was primarily directed against the perils of cannibalism during the hunting epoch.

Man the hunter, she claims, was quite likely to kill and eat human babies, particularly those from a group not his own, without realising or caring whether they were in any way different from other young creatures. Sometime before 50,000 BC, women formed themselves into groups, protecting their children, living and eating apart from men. They ate vegetables and fruit which they grew and gathered, and

occasional dairy products, always avoiding meat. These taboos are still reflected in the Jewish dietary laws which forbid the mixing of milk and meat.

Consequently, the women formed strong groups protecting and providing for the children of the community. Evelyn Reed points out that motherhood was a social not a personal function: "The maternal clan which preceded the father-family was founded on a collectivity of women who were sisters to one another, and mothers to all the children of the community without regard to which mother bore any individual child." This is confirmed by the way Aborigines group themselves into "motherhoods" and "brotherhoods".

Evelyn Reed shows that all major achievements in terms of technology, material and cultural advance came through the work of women. Preserving and storing fruits and vegetables led women to create pots, while growing vegetables led to the utilisation of herbs for medicine. Women in settled communities learned to comb animal hair, spin and weave it for clothes, and with vegetable dyes they developed decoration, becoming the first early artists. She even quotes anthropologists findings which show that women were the builders of houses. When contemporary researchers ask primitive men how their houses are constructed, they receive no answers. Eventually when the women are asked, they produce rough plans and show exactly how the houses are built.

Having learned at some stage to co-operate with each other, the women gained a degree of social control through sexual segregation. Early brotherhoods, living apart, were free to roam and hunt; Evelyn Reed supposes that women made themselves taboo and inaccessible during hunting and fighting expeditions, and when they were in their menstrual cycle.

The men came back from hunting trips to the fixed point in society — the matriarchal grouping. The clan system developed but always under matriarchal leadership. The takeover by men occurred over a long period and was due largely to the accumulation of goods and the desire of the father to pass these on to his own offspring.

Marriage also brought groups of men together

## FLASHBACK

Our publication schedule means that by the time you read a review of an exhibition, it's usually long over. So we're starting *Flash Back* — illustrations and captions which will act as a record of women's art events.



through land control — inherited through the female. Male domination was further reinforced by a patriarchal system of religion displacing earlier goddess worship.

The London Matriarchy study group found Evelyn Reed's book a valuable source of inspiration and information. We formed last year to discover if women's acceptance of her exploitation and of male power, is inherent in human nature or whether it is conditioning built on a lie.

Recently we produced an issue of the Women's Liberation magazine *Shrew*, on the Goddess and the universal women led religion. Our aim is "understanding the past to influence the present. We see the part male based religion has played in demeaning and exploiting women. In exposing this we want to share our

regained confidence with other women . . . we move from the importance of feminist social demands to total reappraisal of patriarchy in politics today." The effect of *Goddess Shrew* has been dynamic: as one woman told us, "You have put me in touch with my past . . . I shall never feel so down trodden again."

Matriarchy Study Group

*Goddess Shrew* is available from M.S.G., 15 Guildford Street, London WC1. 40p inc p&p.

### STRUGGLES FOR A LARGER SOCIALISM

#### SOCIALISM AND THE NEW

#### LIFE:

*The Personal and Sexual Politics* of Edward Carpenter and



have often dismissed the second with the first. This makes it all the more important that today — when feminists and gay women and men are raising demands to do with personal and sexual liberation — we begin to reassess these moments in our socialist past, to become suspicious of the label “cranks” which has been attached to men and women who struggled to create a “new moral world” of sexual joy and equality. We may find in those dusty dreams some of our past which later socialism attempted to disavow.

Sheila Rowbotham's writings have made a major contribution to such a reassessment. Now in these two new books she and Jeffrey Weeks have given us excellent biographical accounts of three of those socialists for whom revolutionary change was about a transformation of personal and emotional life: Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis, and Stella Browne.

Edward Carpenter (1844-1928) was a socialist and homosexual dedicated to the creation of an alternative libertarian culture — “an alternative harbour for the soul” — in which the values of communism could be warmed and nourished. He was a sexual freedom-fighter and a “feminist” who brought to the socialist movement in Sheffield and elsewhere a theory of the “Larger Socialism” which was deeply influential in the last decades of the 19th century.

Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) is best remembered as a pioneer of sex psychology. He was one of the founders of the socialist Fellowship of the New Life, in which Carpenter was also involved, and an advocate of “the revolution of the human spirit”. His writing, like Carpenter's, was very important in the awakening of what Weeks calls “homosexual self-consciousness” in the 1890s; he was also concerned with securing increased social recognition and dignity for women, although on the basis of an idealization of women's maternal role.

As the essays show, both men brought to their theoretical work an imaginative courage born in part from their own sexual lives, in part from the atmosphere of 1880s socialism, in which “the boundaries between moral, aesthetic and political revolt were still fluid.” The

essays probe the relationship between their personal lives and this wider context very sensitively; in particular, Sheila's material on the “internal life of political movements” of the period draws a picture of the daily practice of Carpenter and his fellow socialists which is fascinating. Only a feminist would tell us who did the washing-up in the home which Carpenter shared with his lover, George Merrill, in such a way that we'd fully understand its importance.

Similarly, Sheila's book on Stella Browne is a portrait not only of the woman who fought for women's sexual freedom in both the Communist and Labour parties in the 1920s and '30s, and who founded the Abortion Law Reform Association, but also of the socialist movement in which she and other feminists struggled for a hearing. Like Carpenter and Ellis, she identified with that strain of radicalism which believed that revolutions were about making Love as well as War, and her emphasis on women's right to sexual pleasure (her article, “Sexual Variation Among Women” is reprinted at the end) and the right to control reproduction made her the target of ignorance and hostility. But support for birth control was very widespread among rank-and-file socialist women; and again Sheila's concern with how these thousands of women saw themselves and their own needs gives her account of Stella Browne's work a context and a depth which many biographies of socialists lack.

In the introduction to their book, Sheila and Jeffrey state that they are not trying to find “lessons” from the past for today. Present strategies can never be read off from past struggles. But one important lesson which their essays do offer is the reminder that there has never been just one version of socialism. Rather, in every period there has been a struggle over both the boundaries and content of socialist change, in which feminism and — later — gay consciousness have played key roles. These two little books have not only given me a sense of that past struggle, but also a better understanding of what we now share with that earlier commitment to a Larger Socialism. As Sheila says: “It gives you great confidence in the world to

## PORT/DA — PRESENCE AND ABSENCE

Women's Arts Alliance, May 9–27

Detail from 7 COME 11, 7.11.1975 (actual size 9x5') by Wallace Heim: “Words and images move in the mind. In a ‘suspension’ the words themselves move and the new images spring from their junctions. In the written or invented pieces, the words work in a spatial grammar, connoting an idea or contradictions of ideas. Between the headlines cut from one day's papers, a different news appears. The rules of grammar are invisible. Suspensions at once reinforce and destroy them.”

Havelock Ellis

by Sheila Rowbotham and

Jeffrey Weeks

(Pluto, £1.80)

A NEW WORLD FOR WOMEN:

Stella Browne — Socialist

Feminist

by Sheila Rowbotham

(Pluto, £1.50)

uals — at times, even whole movements — asking this question: what is this new world for which we are struggling? The answers which they gave have since been called utopian, romantic, diversionary: Marx and Engels sniffed at the social communities of Robert Owen and his followers. But still the question persisted, carried by an undercurrent within socialism which retained its concern with subjective change, sexual freedom, alternative cultural forms.

This undercurrent also carried feminism, at times when feminist ideas were not popular within the rest of the Left. The link between “utopianism” and ideas of sexual emancipation has existed since the beginning of the socialist movement, and “scientific socialists”

In 1867 William Morris presided over a meeting of the Hammersmith Socialist League where Edward Carpenter was speaking. “The thing is this,” Morris shouted, banging his fist on the table, “if we had our Revolution tomorrow what should we Socialists do the day after?” “Yes! what?” the audience cried in response.

At different moments in the history of British socialism there have been individ-



# reviews

know that you did not sprout out of nowhere."

Barbara Taylor

## PLAY

### THE AIR I BREATHE

At the Leicester Festival this summer drama students from Bretton Hall College gave a remarkable performance based on the tragedy at Seveso, North Italy, which was poisoned by a toxic chemical cloud a year ago.

The title of the play, *The Air I Breathe*, stresses the shocking fact that by simply breathing the inhabitants of Seveso were poisoned by an obscure chemical acid whose effects have not yet been fully understood.

The success of the play depended upon entertaining the audience without over-dramatising the subject. Two young teachers, Chris Deering and Bob who directed the play, helped the students collect a tremendous amount of information on the activities of the multinational Givaudan-La Roche, from the moment the accident happened on July 10th to the present day. The cast became deeply involved with the issues.

The documentary drama starts with the two children playing near the Icmesa factory — shortly afterwards they develop chloracne, a skin rash disease. The company directors decided not to inform the authorities about the poisoned cloud which had escaped from the factory, and their ensuing behaviour — keeping the people in the dark, deceiving them about what had really happened — was very well acted by the students. They played the Italian style of manager, impeccably dressed, aggressively male, and totally preoccupied with the firm's industrial and financial reputation.

Slides of the increasingly tragic effects of dioxin were projected onto the back of the stage, providing irrefutable evidence that the management was lying about the extent of the damage caused by the accident. The tragedy of the Senno family — the grandmother dies from liver disease and the two children are hopelessly scarred by chloracne — symbolized the plight of all the families in the area.

A chorus of witty tunes

represented the diverse and often contradictory opinions of scientists discussing the problem. They sang their superficial conclusions about the nature of the poison, reminiscent of the MP who said "I would be delighted to eat a salad dressed with dioxin."

Three girls portrayed the dilemma of the pregnant women in the area who were ill-informed about the potential risk to babies, faced humiliating, harsh and moralistic interviews with the hospital committee, and were finally compelled to go to England for an abortion. The violence they underwent made a few people in the audience cry. Their perseverance in their convictions, and their solidarity were movingly dramatised. Then, all of a sudden, the stage was cluttered with a team of cleaners who pretended to decontaminate the area with hovers, detergents and brushes.

Funnily enough, Adele Faccio, the fighter for the Abortion Bill, who helped women from Seveso obtain abortions, was played by an elegant, somewhat soft young woman, when in fact she is a



Seveso — tragic effects of dioxin

tough, uncompromising middle-aged woman.

The entire audience stayed for the debate at the end, identifying both with the families' problems (health, housing and future) and with the women's particular situation. They became aware that similar tragedies could occur in all countries where industrial power seeks profit at the expense of health and social implications — even allowing people to die for its sake.

Manuela Lombardo

## FILM

### THE LOST HONOUR OF KATHARINA BLUM

Directed by Margarethe von

Trotta and Volker Schlöndorff

Screenplay by Margarethe von

Trotta

Katharina Blum loses her honour twice over. For one night, she harbours a man hunted by the police for suspected terrorism. In the present climate of West Germany, where disloyalty to the state (or the slightest suspicion of it) leads to job disqualification and community ostracism, association with a wanted man automatically makes her a traitor. Her honour as a citizen is lost, and with it all citizen's rights: of privacy, of a fair hearing and of means to defend herself against media attacks.

Perhaps worse still, she has given the man shelter in her bed for a night — a man she had never met before. Her sexual immorality is thus a political crime. Her female honour — chastity, fidelity and all the other virtues it comprises — is soiled by gutter press slime; and she becomes a target for society's fear of women's sexuality. The twin motifs of crime against social morality and crime against the state are linked throughout her story.

*Katharina Blum* has been viewed as the mirror of West German repression, especially at the time of the hunt for the Red Army Fraction in the early 70s, when paranoia gripped nation and state. The film's vivid depiction of the armed raid on Katharina's flat after her lover had fled, and of the military style operation to capture him shows the might and readiness of the state against its 'enemies'. Its more secretive methods feature also, in the form of phone-tapping, informers and hidden cameras. Shocking though this is (particularly to audiences outside Germany), state repression as a way of life is his country is presented by the makers as a background to the film's main theme: the barbarity of the press, its lust for character assassination and its power over people's minds and lives.

Katharina's persecution on the front pages of *Die Zeitung* (The News) is modelled on that suffered by Heinrich Boll, author of the book on which the film is based. Boll was hounded by the notorious Springer press for protesting against state infringement of civil liberties during the police raids following Red Army Fraction activities. Katharina's womanhood adds a special dimension because press treatment of women is generally trivial and misogynist: through women like Katharina they can show that all women are Eves, and thereby justify use of their bodies and sexual histories to sell papers. In a political case, there is no need to worry about charges of invasion of privacy either, because the public has 'a right to know'. So every detail of Katharina's life, her sexual relationships, her divorce, family ties, and finally her mother's death, is sniffed out by Totges, ace investigative reporter, fearless exposé of 'immorality', to be spewed out on front pages and eagerly redigested as a cautionary tale. For Katharina, as for many others, trial by the press means punishment by society.

Katharina herself is something of an enigma. Distant and trance-like, she manages to maintain her dignity as her life disintegrates, only occasionally breaking down or venting her anger. Her strength comes partly from her deep sense of independence; but its mainspring is her devotion to Ludwig, her one-night lover. It seems that the memory of those few hours together sustains her through all the misery that follows, keeping her calm and unyielding under brutal interrogation. The effect is in stark contrast with her media image. Besieged by pornographic mail and obscene phone calls, she retains a purity and purpose unattainable to her detractors, whose crude devotion to duty blinds them to the mysteries of love: Inspector Beizenne: "Did he screw you?" — Katharina: "I wouldn't put it like that."

This romanticism inevitably makes Katharina's plight a very private one despite her public crucifixion, for while we can understand her disgust and anger at the press and police, her passion for Ludwig closes us out. She becomes a woman, any woman,



# reviews



'Mantlemass' book, gives me an opportunity to reconsider this important series of historical novels by Barbara Willard, especially as this latest is also claimed to be the last.

'Mantlemass' novels are set in Ashdown Forest in Sussex, the home of the Mallory and Medley families whose history is traced through seven books (so far) from the Battle of Bosworth Field right up to the Civil War (1485-1660). The lives of these forest families are inevitably caught up in the turbulent events that marked a century and a half of great change with the ending of feudalism.

Willard immerses the reader in forest ways and speech, giving the feel of the country through the seasons, and easily incorporating descriptions of technical processes and implements. On this sure foundation she builds her characters from generation to generation and plays out her dramas of treachery, love, courage and pig-headedness.

The series has a strong romantic element — the family are the unacknow-

ledged descendents of Richard III, but the final volume (*Harrow and Harvest*) concludes "birth and marrying shift us back and fore till we're too dizzy to be sure where we started", and throughout the books we indeed see this 'shifting' of class and position at work, and yet become aware of the wealth of skills and knowledge gained on which later generations can build.

Willard is also one of few historical novelists for children who gives back to women their rightful place in history. Certainly her women are bounded by custom but within these constraints there are areas of choice and Willard's gallery of women are able to choose different paths. Thus we have prim, dutiful Mary in *A Cold Wind Blowing*, a 'perfect' wife and mother, and forthright Dame Elizabeth (*The Lark and the Laurel*) who trades in rabbit skins and is a housewife in the old sense of the word — her hand as she herself puts it, will "bake, will brew, will write accounts fairly, will strike in anger, soothe in sickness,

be silk or iron on a rein. It will cull herbs, bind up sores, carve meat, shear a fleece or gut a coney."

In *The Iron Lily* Lillias Rowan works hard after her husband's death to become master of her own iron foundry, in competition with other foundries and taking controversial decisions to employ 'foreign' labour at her forge. And there are others — Cecily Jolland (*The Lark and the Laurel*) who learns to love freedom after being treated as a painted doll to be married off for gain, spirited Catherine (*The Sprig of Broom*) prepared to defy convention and marry beneath her, and strong intelligent Cecilia (*Harrow and Harvest*) whose researches into the family history are to lead her to rediscover its 'royal' secret. As Willard herself comments at one point in her narrative, "powerful women, indeed . . . [are] . . . a Mantlemass tradition".

The 'Mantlemass' novels are worth reading in chronological order, i.e. *The Lark and the Laurel*, *The Sprig of Broom*, *A Cold Wind Blowing*, *The Eldest Son*, *The Iron Lily* and *Harrow and*

*Harvest*. For 11 and upwards. The appetites of younger readers (8 to 11) will be whetted by the recent *The Miller's Boy* which cleverly introduces the 'Mantlemass' epic at its beginning while not being central to it. All these books are published by Kestrel and are gradually appearing as Puffin paperbacks too.

Rosemary Stones,  
Children's Rights Workshop

## COME AWAY FROM THE WATER, SHIRLEY

by John Burningham  
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The popular and well established author and illustrator John Burningham has come up with a lively Shirley in his latest picture book. While trad mum and dad sit, nag and ignore her, Shirley gets on with her own energetic treasure hunt, pirates and all. A superb picture book — a little girl's fantasy come true? — the reality of a day by the sea. This is a sure-fire winner with kids up to 8 years old. Great pictures.

## GRUNWICK WOMEN

meet the strikers. "I was a bit scared at first, but it turned out alright." Later that day she joined the picketline.

The Asian women also stress that despite the aggravation at the gates, they maintain personal contact with women from their community who are scabbing. One of them was the close friend of Nirmala Patel. They worked together in Grunwick's office. "It is very sad," said Ms Patel, who still hoped that her former workmate would join them. Scabs and strikers came together several weeks ago for a marriage in their community, and for that day tried to forget that they were on opposite sides of the gate.

Sarah Greaves, a feminist who has been supporting the pickets, also said that she felt "really bad shouting at the scabs. It's awful, you get no chance to talk to them. The police just don't give you a chance, and that's what polarises the whole thing."

As for many other feminists, this strike is her first experience of violent confrontation and volatile industrial action. "I went at the end of the first week, and it was pretty hairy. I was completely taken by surprise. And I was in a state of shock about it for some time." Before this her contact with politics was "basically about dealing with personal politics, but I felt I had been bashing my head against various brick walls. I felt a lot of energy to do something more about my oppres-

sion as a woman, and about the general political situation. During this I have realised that the situation was very much more serious than I had thought. You see up to then there was a real distance for me between left wing politics and feminism. It really hit me hard to realise that this whole political thing at Grunwick comes down to a fight in the streets."

She was wandering round to the back gate with her friends to join the picket. "Suddenly we were set upon by a huge flying wedge. I was in the middle of it all before I'd had time to make any decisions. I was terrified, absolutely scared stiff. I was done for assault. Couldn't believe it . . . They said I kicked a policeman in the back causing him to fall to the ground."

One thing the experience has produced is "a really trusting circle of friends. We meet every morning to go to Grunwick, we support each other — men and women — and now we've built up a support group in West London. I'd felt very isolated for a long time, particularly because I've got a four-year-old son to bring up on my own. But now we are taking turns looking after him so that I can join the picket. It is really breaking down the barriers between what is called personal and political."

How did she feel about the trade union men? "I thought they were great. Maybe if you bumped up against some miners in a pub there would be all sorts of sexist stuff. But at Grunwick you thought they had the same feelings that we did." Other feminists said they were struck by the

sense of order and purpose introduced by trade union delegations. At a socialist feminist conference in London on July 10, women involved in the picketing agreed to try to function as a women's contingent, in order to be more of a presence, and to coordinate as a group with the strikers. Many feminists have been picketing regularly, but had not identified themselves with banners.

Gail Lewis, a black feminist who joined the picketline virtually every day with other feminists, commented that she felt impressed by the trade unionists' "sense of solidarity and caring in their discipline. They were really caring, trying to see that our people didn't get hurt." And Maria Duggan, another feminist who suffered a fractured leg when she was stamped on by police, said she felt "very solid with the support of the men, particularly the miners."

But they also confronted sexism on the picketline. "In one struggle with the police you would hear men testing manhood by saying things like 'What sort of man are you, hitting a woman?' to the police," said Gail Lewis. "So I said 'Hey what's this, we are here as part of the struggle and if you are suggesting that women are more feeble then we'll have that out with you here and now.' When another woman overheard male pickets complaining that 'We'd have got that bus if it wasn't for those silly women in the way', she countered, 'Wait a minute, it's those silly girls who have been holding that gate all this time.' □





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